THE CONTINENTAL AESTHETICS READER

SECOND EDITION

EDITED BY CLIVE CAZEAUX

ROUTLEDGE

The Continental Aesthetics Reader

The Continental Aesthetics Reader brings together classic and contemporary writings on art and aesthetics from the major figures in continental thought. The second edition is clearly divided into seven sections:

- Nineteenth-Century German Aesthetics
- Phenomenology and Hermeneutics
- Marxism and Critical Theory
- Excess and Affect
- Embodiment and Technology
- Poststructuralism and Postmodernism
- Aesthetic Ontologies.

Each section is clearly placed in its historical and philosophical context, and each philosopher has an introduction by Clive Cazeaux. An updated list of readings for this edition includes selections from Agamben, Butler, Guattari, Nancy, Virilio, and Žižek. Suggestions for further reading are given, and there is a glossary of over fifty key terms.

Ideal for introductory courses in aesthetics, continental philosophy, art, and visual studies, *The Continental Aesthetics Reader* provides a thorough introduction to some of the most influential writings on art and aesthetics, from Kant and Hegel to Badiou and Rancière.

Clive Cazeaux is Reader in Aesthetics at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. His research interests are the philosophies of metaphor, visual thinking, visual arts research, and art-science practice. He is the author of *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy: From Kant to Derrida* (Routledge 2007).

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

The Continental Aesthetics Reader

Second edition

Edited by

Clive Cazeaux

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First edition published 2000
Second edition published 2011
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

First issued in hardback 2017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2011 Selection and editorial matter, Clive Cazeaux

Typeset in Bell Gothic and Perpetua by GreenGate Publishing Services, Tonbridge, Kent

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book has been requested

ISBN 13: 978-1-138-40556-1 (hbk)
ISBN 13: 978-0-415-48184-7 (pbk)

Contents

Acknowledgements ix
Introduction xiii

PART 1
Nineteenth-Century German Aesthetics **1**

Introduction 1

1 Immanuel Kant
EXTRACTS FROM 'ANALYTIC OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT' AND 'DIALECTIC OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT', *CRITIQUE OF JUDGMENT* 3

2 G.W.F. Hegel
EXTRACTS FROM *AESTHETICS: LECTURES ON FINE ART* 40

3 Friedrich Nietzsche
ON TRUTH AND LIE IN AN EXTRAMORAL SENSE 62

PART 2
Phenomenology and Hermeneutics **77**

Introduction 77

4 Martin Heidegger
THE ORIGIN OF THE WORK OF ART 79

5 Jean-Paul Sartre
WHAT IS WRITING? 123

6 Emmanuel Levinas
REALITY AND ITS SHADOW 139

7 Mikel Dufrenne
THE WORLD OF THE AESTHETIC OBJECT 152

8 Gaston Bachelard
THE DIALECTICS OF OUTSIDE AND INSIDE 172

9 Hans-Georg Gadamer
AESTHETICS AND HERMENEUTICS 186

10 Paul Ricoeur
WHAT IS A TEXT? EXPLANATION AND UNDERSTANDING 195

11 Gianni Vattimo
THE DEATH OR DECLINE OF ART 212

PART 3
Marxism and Critical Theory **221**

Introduction 221

12 Karl Marx
PRIVATE PROPERTY AND COMMUNISM 223

13 Theodor W. Adorno
EXTRACTS FROM *MINIMA MORALIA* 234

14 Herbert Marcuse
NATURE AND REVOLUTION 258

15 Mikhail Bakhtin
HETEROGLOSSIA IN THE NOVEL 270

16 Jürgen Habermas
MODERNITY VERSUS POSTMODERNITY 295

PART 4
Excess and Affect **307**

Introduction 307

17 Sigmund Freud
THE UNCONSCIOUS 309

18 Maurice Blanchot
THE ORIGINAL EXPERIENCE 327

19 Georges Bataille
SANCTITY, EROTICISM AND SOLITUDE 339

20 Jacques Lacan
THE AGENCY OF THE LETTER IN THE UNCONSCIOUS OR REASON SINCE FREUD 349

21 Luce Irigaray
COSÌ FAN TUTTI 374

22 Julia Kristeva
APPROACHING ABJECTION 388

23 Slavoj Žižek
PORNOGRAPHY, NOSTALGIA, MONTAGE: A TRIAD OF THE GAZE 409

PART 5
Embodiment and Technology **427**

Introduction 427

24 Walter Benjamin
THE WORK OF ART IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION 429

25 Maurice Merleau-Ponty
EYE AND MIND 451

26 Jean Baudrillard
THE EVIL DEMON OF IMAGES 477

27 Judith Butler
GENDER IS BURNING: QUESTIONS OF APPROPRIATION AND SUBVERSION 488

28 Paul Virilio
THE AESTHETICS OF DISAPPEARANCE PART IV 506

PART 6
Poststructuralism and Postmodernism **515**

Introduction 515

29 Roland Barthes
THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR 519

30 Michel Foucault
WHAT IS AN AUTHOR? 525

31 Jacques Derrida
THE PARERGON 540

32 Paul de Man
THE RESISTANCE TO THEORY 570

33 Jean-François Lyotard
THE SUBLIME AND THE AVANT-GARDE 585

34 Hélène Cixous
THE LAST PAINTING OR THE PORTRAIT OF GOD 598

PART 7
Aesthetic Ontologies **615**

Introduction 615

35 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari
PERCEPT, AFFECT, AND CONCEPT 617

36 Félix Guattari
THE NEW AESTHETIC PARADIGM 643

37 Jean-Luc Nancy
ART, A FRAGMENT 657

38 Giorgio Agamben
THE MELANCHOLY ANGEL 672

39 Alain Badiou
ART AND PHILOSOPHY 686

40 Jacques Rancière
AESTHETICS AS POLITICS 701

Glossary 718
Index 733

Acknowledgements

The following are reproduced with kind permission. Any omissions brought to the publisher's attention will be remedied in future editions.

Part 1: Nineteenth-Century German Aesthetics

Immanuel Kant, extracts from 'Analytic of aesthetic judgment' and 'Dialectic of aesthetic judgment', *Critique of Judgment*, trans. W.S. Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987, §§ 32–38, 44–49, 56–59; pp. 145–56, 172–88, 210–30. © Hackett Publishing Company. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

G.W.F. Hegel, 'Concept of the beauty of art' and 'Division of the subject', *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T.M. Knox, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 1–3, 22–25, 69–90. © By permission of Oxford University Press.

Friedrich Nietzsche, 'On truth and lie in an extramoral sense', *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s*, trans. and ed. D. Breazeale, Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1990, pp. 79–91. © 1979 by David Breazeale. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.W

Part 2: Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

Martin Heidegger, 'The origin of the work of art', *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter, New York: Harper and Row, 1971, pp. 17–87. © 1971 by Martin Heidegger. Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

Jean-Paul Sartre, 'What is writing?', *What is Literature?,* London: Routledge, 1997, pp. 1–25. © Reproduced by permission of Taylor & Francis Books UK.

Emmanuel Levinas, 'Reality and its shadow', *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. A. Lingis, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987, pp. 1–14. © Martinus Nijhoff. Reproduced with permission of Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Mikel Dufrenne, 'The world of the aesthetic object', *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, trans. E.S. Casey, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966, pp. 166–98. © Northwestern University Press.

Gaston Bachelard, 'The dialectics of outside and inside', *The Poetics of Space*, trans. M. Jolas, New York: Orion Press, 1964, pp. 211–31. © 1964 by The Orion Press, Inc. Original copyright © 1958 by Presses Universitaires de France. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Group (USA), Inc.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'Aesthetics and hermeneutics', *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. and trans. D.E. Linge, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977, pp. 95–104. © University of California Press.

Paul Ricoeur, 'What is a text? Explanation and understanding', *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, trans. J.B. Thompson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 146–64. © Cambridge University Press.

Gianni Vattimo, 'The death or decline of art', *The End of Modernity*, trans. J.R. Snyder, Cambridge: Polity, 1988, pp. 51–64. © 1988 Polity Press. Reprinted with permission of The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Part 3: Marxism and Critical Theory

Karl Marx, 'Private property and communism', *Early Writings*, trans. R. Livingstone and G. Benton, London: Penguin, 1992, pp. 345–58. Permission granted by New Left Review.

Theodor W. Adorno, 'Extracts from *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott, London: Verso, 1978, pp. 138–52, 212–31. © Verso.

Herbert Marcuse, 'Nature and revolution', *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1972, pp. 59–78. © Beacon Press. Reprinted by permission of Beacon Press, Boston.

Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Heteroglossia in the novel', *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, pp. 300–31. © University of Texas Press.

Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity versus postmodernity', *New German Critique*, 1981, vol. 22, pp. 3–14. © 1981, New German Critique, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission of the publisher, Duke University Press.

Part 4: Excess and Affect

Sigmund Freud, 'The unconscious', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. XIV: Papers on Metapsychology*, ed. J. Strachey, London: Hogarth Press, 1974, pp. 166–76, 196–204. © The Institute of Psycho-Analysis and The Hogarth Press. Reprinted by permission of The Random House Group Ltd and Basic Books, a member of Perseus Books Group.

Maurice Blanchot, 'The original experience', *The Space of Literature*, trans. A. Smock, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982, pp. 234–47. © University of Nebraska Press.

Georges Bataille, 'Sanctity, eroticism and solitude', *Erotism*, trans. M. Dalwood, San Francisco: City Lights, 1962, pp. 252–64. © City Lights Books. Reprinted by permission of City Lights Books, Marion Boyars Publishers (London 2006).

Jacques Lacan, 'The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud', *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. A. Sheridan, London: Tavistock, 1977, pp. 161–97. © Tavistock/Routledge. Reproduced by permission of Taylor & Francis Books UK.

Luce Irigaray, 'Così fan tutti', *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. C. Porter with C. Burke, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985, pp. 86–105. © Cornell University Press. Used by permission of the publisher.

Julia Kristeva, 'Approaching abjection', *Powers of Horror*, trans. L.S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, pp. 1–31. Originally appeared in French as *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*. © 1980 Editions du Seuil. Reprinted by permission of Georges Borchardt, Inc., for Editions du Seuil.

Slavoj Žižek, 'Pornography, nostalgia, montage: a triad of the gaze', *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991, pp. 107–22. © Massachusetts Institute of Technology, by permission of The MIT Press.

Part 5: Embodiment and Technology

Walter Benjamin, 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction', *Illuminations*. © 1955 by Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt a.M., trans. H. Zohn, London: Jonathan Cape, 1970, pp. 219–53. © 1968 and renewed 1996 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and mind', *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, ed. G.A. Johnson, trans. M.B. Smith, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966, pp. 121–50. © Northwestern University Press (North America) and © Editions Gallimard, Paris (world excluding North America).

Jean Baudrillard, 'The evil demon of images', *The Evil Demon of Images*, trans. P. Patton and P. Foss, Sydney: Power Institute of Fine Arts, 1987, pp. 13–34. © Power Publications.

Judith Butler, 'Gender is burning: questions of appropriation and subversion', *Bodies That Matter*, London: Routledge, 1993, pp. 121–40. © Used with permission of Taylor & Francis Group.

Paul Virilio, 'Part IV', *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, trans. P. Beitchman, New York: Semiotext(e), 1991, pp. 99–111. © 2009 by Semiotext(e). Used by permission of the publisher: http://www.semiotexte.com.

Part 6: Poststructuralism and Postmodernism

Roland Barthes, 'The death of the author', *Image, Music, Text*, trans. S. Heath, London: Fontana, 1977, pp. 142–48. © 1977 HarperCollins. Reproduced by permission of HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

Michel Foucault, 'What is an author?', *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. D.F. Bouchard, trans. J.V. Harari, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977, pp. 113–38. © Cornell University Press. Used by permission of the publisher.

Jacques Derrida, 'The parergon', *The Truth in Painting*, trans. G. Bennington and I. McLeod, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp. 37–82. © University of Chicago Press.

Paul de Man, 'The resistance to theory', *Yale French Studies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982, pp. 355–71. © Yale University Press.

Jean-François Lyotard, 'The sublime and the avant-garde', *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. A. Benjamin, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, pp. 196–211. © Edinburgh University Press, http://www.euppublishing.com.

Hélène Cixous, 'The last painting or the portrait of God', '*Coming to Writing' and Other Essays*, ed. D. Benson, trans. S. Cornell *et al.*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991, pp. 104–31. © 1991 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Lucas Cranach, *Lucretia*, 1533. © Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

Part 7: Aesthetic Ontologies

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 'Percept, affect, and concept', *What is Philosophy?*, trans. H. Tomlinson and G. Burchill, London: Verso, 1994, pp. 163–99. © Verso.

Félix Guattari, 'The new aesthetic paradigm', *Chaosmosis: An Ethno-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. P. Bains and J. Pefanis, Sydney: Power Publications, 1995, pp. 98–118. © Power Institute, Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis.

Jean-Luc Nancy, 'Art, a fragment', *The Sense of the World*, trans. J.S. Librett, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998, pp. 123–39. © University of Minnesota Press.

Giorgio Agamben, 'The melancholy angel', *The Man Without Content*, trans. G. Albert, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, pp. 104–15. © 1999 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Jr. University. All rights reserved. Used with the permission of Stanford University Press, http://www.sup.org.

Alain Badiou, 'Art and philosophy', *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, trans. A. Toscano, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005, pp. 1–15. © 2004 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Jr. University; 1998 Editions du Seuil.

Jacques Rancière, 'Aesthetics as politics', *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, trans. S. Corcoran, Cambridge: Polity, 2009, pp. 19–44. © Polity Press.

Albrecht Dürer, *Melancholia*, 1514. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Paul Klee, *Angelus Novus*, 1920. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, donated by John and Paul Herring, Jo Carole and Ronald Lauder, Fania and Gershom. © DACS 2010.

I would like to thank the following people: Keith Ansell-Pearson, Catherine Belsey, Fred Botting, Gideon Calder, Andrew Edgar, Kevin Edge, Martin Gaughan, Mark Harris, Karin Hiscock, Adrian Johnston, John Mullarkey, Christopher Norris, and Christopher Short for their advice on essay selections for this edition and the first; Fiona Cairns for arranging the permissions; Theodoros Grammenos for helping to compile the bibliographies; Sophie Vlacos for her help with the proofreading; Tony Bruce, Gemma Dunn, and Katy Hamilton at Routledge for their guidance and encouragement; and the anonymous referees for their suggestions on structure and content at the start of the process. Finally, a special 'thank you' to Jason Ingram and Philippa Lawrence for letting me use his photograph of her artwork on the cover.

Cardiff, September 2010

Introduction

Aesthetics is becoming a powerful force in philosophy. Traditionally, the subject has always occupied the margins of philosophy, for the simple reason that it deals with those aspects of experience which are the least amenable to categorization, i.e. art, beauty, emotion, and the ever-changing delights of the senses. However, the divisions imposed on reality by modern reason and changes brought about by the industrialization of experience have necessitated a rethinking of the relationship between the individual and reality. Gone are notions of a distinct self in receipt of a mind-independent world and, in their place, are theses to the effect that human subjectivity and reality are interconnected at a fundamental level. One consequence of this shift is that aesthetic experience is redefined. Far from being a mere adjunct to everyday perception, it is shown to be vital to an understanding of the relationship between human being and the world. The aesthetic, formerly exiled from mainstream attention, assumes centre-stage as a sensibility that is critical of the divisions exercised by modern thought, and the region to which we can turn for new moral, political, and cognitive possibilities.

This is the second, expanded edition of *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*. It brings together key texts by forty leading thinkers in modern and contemporary aesthetics. As well as charting the development of ideas from the 'long' nineteenth century (extracts are included from Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, published in 1790) and the defining texts of twentieth-century aesthetics, this edition also includes philosophers and themes which have come to prominence since 2000. The newly prominent figures are: Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, Judith Butler, Félix Guattari (writing independently of Gilles Deleuze), Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Rancière, Paul Virilio, and Slavoj Žižek. Also new to this edition, but by no means 'new kids on the block', are Paul Ricoeur and Mikhail Bakhtin, whose canonical significance within aesthetics has continued to grow in recent decades. The *Reader* is in seven parts: (1) Nineteenth-Century German Aesthetics, (2) Phenomenology and Hermeneutics, (3) Marxism and Critical Theory, (4) Excess and Affect, (5) Embodiment and Technology, (6) Poststructuralism and Postmodernism, and (7) Aesthetic Ontologies. As well as taking isms and schools of thought as the basis for its sections, this edition also groups essays according to themes, such as 'excess and affect', 'embodiment and technology', and 'aesthetic ontologies'. The first two are certainly not recent, but have been adopted to acknowledge that much aesthetic philosophy gains its currency from being lifted out of any home territory it might claim for itself and applied to a series of shared concerns. Part 7, 'Aesthetic Ontologies', contains some of the most recent writing in the book: approaches to aesthetics which respond to or go beyond poststructuralism and postmodernism. The title of the section reflects the fact that it is either too early or simply inappropriate to suggest a new ism. What can be noted, however, is a renewed commitment to the importance of ontology in expanding the possibilities of aesthetic thought. In nearly all cases, the texts in the *Reader* are complete and unabridged. Introductions to each part and to each philosopher are provided by the editor. After each essay, there is a bibliography of major works in English by the author and suggested titles for further reading.

The decision to select complete and unabridged essays for the *Reader* wherever possible comes from my dissatisfaction with anthologies that offer heavily filleted versions of original works. A series of excerpts or selected passages often cannot do justice to the broader argument in which the individual claims are set. In any analysis of a text, certain passages will be highlighted and emphasized at the expense of others, and any process which limits the freedom of the reader to make their own comparisons within the body of an essay is an unwelcome intervention. However, there are some cases where complete works could not be reproduced. The texts from Marx and Adorno are, by their nature, fragmentary and, in a book of this kind, the epoch-defining systems of Kant and Hegel can only be represented in extract form. The only essay where cuts have been made because of length is with Freud, and here I have excised passages whose removal I felt detracted the least from the overall argument.

While the organization of the chapters into sections acknowledges certain shared interests and methods, it is not meant to signify the existence of separate, uniform lines of enquiry. There are several instances when an author included in one category could have easily been placed in another. Essays and arguments gain their critical edge by being part of a continuous, evolving body of ideas and, in respect of this, *The Continental Aesthetics Reader* sets out to place its essays in a constellational relationship. Once individual items are placed side-by-side, connections materialize which transform all the participants. Proximities and distances emerge which let the reader see how the various positions speak to one another, where the claims of one are reinforced by the claims of a second, or are subject to re-evaluation by the criticisms of a third. Just how thought is organized and just how categories relate to their subject matter are in fact prominent themes in contemporary aesthetics, and are explored below by, among others, Kant, Nietzsche, Bachelard, Adorno, and Habermas.

With regard to the communication that occurs between essays, aesthetics is in a particularly unique position. As a subject in its own right, its arguments and counter-arguments achieve the level of specialized focus necessary to bring new possibilities into view yet, because of the scope of the subject, these possibilities have implications which reach beyond aesthetics to theoretical enquiry across the full range of the humanities. For example, poststructuralism's interest in the process of writing makes us consider the contingent, constructed properties of thought, and the work done within hermeneutics and critical theory on art and understanding brings to wider attention the need for an ethics of communication. Thus, focusing on the eddies and currents which make up contemporary aesthetic debate lets us witness the flow of ideas within modern European thought as a whole.

One reason aesthetics can do this, why it holds this unique position, is because, as I say at the start, it occupies the margins of philosophy, dealing with those aspects of experience which are the least amenable to categorization, i.e. art, beauty, emotion, and the senses. Defining 'aesthetics' is not easy. The word has a number of distinct but related meanings: (1) the ancient Greek *aisthesis*, or perception by means of the senses; (2) the modern (eighteenth- and nineteenth-century) sense of the beautiful and pleasurable in art and nature; and (3) the critical dimension assigned to art, experience and the senses in the continental tradition of philosophy since Kant. I go into more detail on these meanings below. For now, my point is that running through all three meanings are properties of marginality and recalcitrance, which means that the 'aesthetic' can never be something whose meaning is taken for granted. Art, beauty, emotion, and the senses will be theorized and defined philosophically, but they will also push back, offering resistance and new possibilities which challenge thought and demand reappraisal. It is in this way that aesthetics requires bifocal vision: a focus on the particularities of art and sensory experience, and simultaneous study of the movements in European thought which engage with the aesthetic or are challenged by it.

I have also considered the different forms of artwork – literature, music, the visual arts – that are discussed in the essays, mindful that too much attention paid to one category might alienate readers from

other areas or that, by attempting to cover a bit of everything, I end up diluting the whole enterprise. Fortunately, the pattern of debate within mainstream continental aesthetics is such that it seldom manifests itself as the philosophy of any one particular artform, and so there is little opportunity for bias to arise. Instead, themes emerge which draw on relationships between all the arts. 'Art' is regularly broached as a category *in general*: an artefact – be it a painting, a piece of music, or a performance – which, by being the sensuous embodiment of conscious enquiry, invites us to reassess our understanding of the way we interact with other objects and minds. The body and the five senses represent other areas of common interest. Bodily sensation roots us in existence, and the interventions which art and philosophy make in our appreciation of the senses affect how we view our position in the world. Nietzsche, Marx, Bachelard, Merleau-Ponty, Kristeva, and Rancière all show how the textures of sensation are linked to wider debates regarding the structure of thought and the creation of social values.

Another very important development is that, in many respects, art and philosophy have become intimately related. This is primarily a result of the various intersections between the philosophical or the rational, on the one hand, and the artistic, on the other, which have been created within nineteenth-century German philosophy, phenomenology, critical theory, psychoanalysis, structuralism, and feminism. These connections are posited because, for example, a philosophical system cannot complete itself without drawing upon the aesthetic, as in the case of Kant, or art is assigned a fundamental structure which, it is claimed, exemplifies the condition of human being in the world, with Heidegger, or the form of philosophical writing becomes performative, becomes a kind of art, in order to reveal, resist, or critique dominant modes of thought. Nietzsche, Adorno, Blanchot, Derrida, and Cixous, in the texts representing them here, write their philosophy *as art*, treating language not so much as a linear conveyor of ideas but as a medium which, through transgression and manipulation, can let us witness the creation and construction of thought.

As words with a particular philosophical currency, 'continental' and 'aesthetics' deserve some explanation. 'Aesthetics' has a number of different though related meanings. As I have already indicated, there are three senses of the term. (1) In ancient Greek philosophy, in the texts of the pre-Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle, *aisthesis* refers to lived, felt experience, knowledge as it is obtained through the senses, in contrast to *eidos*, knowledge derived from reason and intellection, from which we get the word 'idea'. The distinction remains with us today and underlies much contemporary thought. The seventeenth-century rationalist philosopher René Descartes is one figure who can be singled out as reasserting the distinction. He is generally regarded as the founder of modern philosophy on the grounds that he demonstrates the independence of human rationality from God. However, the argument upon which his entire system rests, the *cogito* – 'I think, therefore, I am' (from the *Discourse on Method* (1637)) – is also an argument for the primacy of thought over sense perception.

(2) Perhaps the most familiar sense of the term is aesthetics as the study of beauty in art and nature. First used in this way by the eighteenth-century German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, interest in beauty in this period accompanies changes in Western society's economic structure, and the formation of the modern, Cartesian individual. The transition from feudalism to capitalism initiates the move from the absolute law of the aristocracy to the subjective freedom of the new bourgeoisie, who institute beauty and the fine arts as expressions of their new class identity. Encounters with art and beauty also figure prominently as experiences which test or have to be accommodated by the theories of knowledge being developed to make sense of the new Cartesian self. Aesthetics continues to be active in the formation of romantic theories of beauty reacting against the classical terms inherited by early modern thought. Whereas classicism explains beauty in terms of set relational or mathematical properties, romanticism claims for the artist a unique, holistic relationship with nature, which means that artistic, aesthetic experience transcends rules and prescriptive criteria.

(3) The third, critical meaning of 'aesthetics' comes from Immanuel Kant's philosophy and is elaborated within the philosophical traditions which extend or challenge his thought (and which are represented in this *Reader*). Kant sees subjective experience and objective knowledge becoming increasingly polarized within modern philosophy and, in response, constructs a system of thought in which subjective experience and the condition of belonging to a world are shown to be interrelated. The aesthetic is traditionally placed beyond words and Kant's ingenious move is to take its property of being resistant to conceptualization and make it the arena in which the interaction between consciousness and reality is worked out. For the first time, what exists beyond description is not placed beyond understanding or in opposition to everyday experience but argued to be the dynamic state of conceptual reappraisal that is constitutive of our attempts to deal with any new situation. What had been theorized as a narrow and isolated band of experience is seen to arch across all the 'hard', world-confronting regions of thought, e.g. epistemology, ethics, ontology. Occasions when we are coming to terms with an artwork or enjoying a moment of heightened sensation become vital to an understanding of our cognitive and moral contact with the world.

Why 'continental' aesthetics? In the Western tradition, it is often claimed that there are two styles or ways of doing philosophy: the *continental*, characterized primarily by the work of French, German, and Italian philosophers, and the *analytic*, dominant in most American and British philosophy departments. However, the distinction is far from clear. It cannot easily be drawn along geographical lines, since a large amount of analytic philosophy is written in continental Europe, plus two of the originators of the analytic tradition, Gottlob Frege and Rudolf Carnap, were German. Similarly much continental philosophy takes place outside the continent, in the UK, the USA, and Australasia. One factor to which geography does contribute unfortunately is the projection of 'continental' philosophy *as an idea* onto the continent by the Anglo-American academy, an expression of the concern held by English speakers that the non-English-speaking people across the water are 'different' or 'other'. In this sense, 'continental' is an Anglo-American invention that would not be recognized by any individual living in continental Europe, a point nicely illustrated by Critchley's remark that one does not ask for 'a continental breakfast in Paris'.[1]

But the continental–analytic distinction is more than Anglo-American anxiety over Johnny Foreigner; it is possible to identify some grounds for drawing the contrast. As ways or styles of doing philosophy, the distinction is often caricatured in the following terms, in this case by Stanley Rosen: 'precision, conceptual clarity and systematic rigour are the property of analytical philosophy, whilst the continentals indulge in speculative metaphysics or cultural hermeneutics, or, alternatively, depending on one's sympathies, in wool-gathering and bathos'.[2] But as I said, this is a caricature. Clarity and obscurity (or wool-gathering) are relative terms: speculative metaphysics can be exceptionally clear and precise, while the precision and rigour which supposedly typify analytic writing can generate extremely turgid prose. There is nevertheless something to the notion that the continental–analytic distinction is about style or the way one does philosophy. It is, I suggest, a matter of the attitude with which language and history are approached. The difference is crystallized in the 'science versus metaphysics' contest between Carnap and Heidegger in 1929. For Carnap and the Vienna Circle, the true view of the world is the scientific one, because of the visible success with which science continues to access and explain the natural world, and because science produces statements which can be verified by experience. However, science represents a forgetting of metaphysics, Heidegger argues, since, in focusing on what is given and measurable in experience, it fails to address all the aspects of human life which elude classification and the structures or elements beyond experience which allow experience to come into being in the first place. These though are meanings which, as far as Carnap is concerned, do not correspond to verifiable objects or events in experience and so are dismissed as meaningless.[3]

This marks the continental–analytic divide over language. Based on the scientific conception of the world as a domain that is open to view and to exact description, the analytic conception of language is that it is an instrument for referring to objects and for enabling the formulation of clear and precise statements which can go on to become the basis for logical analysis. In the case of contemporary analytic aesthetics, for example, in response to the question 'what is art?', an analytic philosopher might attempt to devise a checklist of properties that an object must have in order to count as a work of art, and then seek to establish through logical analysis whether or not any can become a necessary or a sufficient condition of something's being classified a work of art. In Heidegger's view, this is language stripped of the depth, texture, and resonance which it carries as part of human being in the world. Language, for Heidegger, is something in its own right; it accompanies us in our activities, and is to be experienced and lived. This attitude to language finds expression in continental philosophy in a number of ways. (1) As I have already explained, philosophy can be written performatively, where the point to be made is shown or displayed *through the writing*, rather than being explicitly stated or described *by the writing*. (2) Writing does not just describe the world but can construct it through the perspectives and concepts that are chosen. Writing is a series of choices, and as such makes an ethical demand upon us. What is written is offered as a view, as a way of rethinking the world. (3) We can write to stretch or create an idea, to extend what is possible. Why devote lots of energy in philosophical writing exclusively to making language fit the world or the world as you see it, when it might be possible to create something transformative or emancipatory? This has been an ambition for, among others, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Deleuze and Guattari. (4) A polemical stance is taken, where an extreme or an exaggerated case is made in order to reveal what is possible through excess or the potential consequences of a predicament, and to elicit a reaction.

The linguistic difference informs the contrasting attitudes to history within continental and analytic philosophy. The continentally favoured idea that thought is intimately tied to the language in which it is expressed means that thought is intimately tied to the concepts and beliefs that are available at any one time. On this view, history is not simply a record of past events but also a horizon for the present and the future – a dimension referred to as 'historicity' – in as much as it includes all the sedimented, buried, and sometimes-uncovered understandings from the past which may be active in the way we think and speak today. The nature of historical consciousness and the question of how it is possible for perception through the lens of one period to grasp truths from another are prominent questions for continental philosophy, especially for critical theory and hermeneutics. The contrasting scientific, analytic view is that the world is transparently and atemporally open to view, without one's linguistic or historical standpoint leaving a mark, and changing only because science continues to make discoveries.

Are these observations sufficient to confirm that the continental–analytic distinction refers to a real-world division? Critchley is inclined to think so. Continental philosophy's historical and material rootedness in the life-world, he suggests, gives it a project which it can clearly call its own, as distinct from anything which might overlap with the analytic tradition. This is a three-fold project of praxis, critique, and emancipation: the working with or against or in between current practices to generate criticism and crisis which can lead to new forms of life, socially, politically, technologically, and culturally.[4] However, Glendinning is less convinced. He maintains that a distinction can be drawn but it is between analytic philosophy and *all the things which analytic philosophy thinks it is not*.[5] There isn't anything peculiar to continental philosophy; there is no style or history or 'internal glue' which binds continental philosophy together as a unified project.[6] But both views in this exchange rely on the notion that a word or phrase only has currency if it refers to an item in the world – in this case, the identity of continental philosophy – when one of the things we have learned from twentieth-century philosophy and linguistics is that words can acquire meaning through being acted out, performed, through our *living into them*. If Glendinning is right and Critchley's praxis–critique–emancipation project is

unfounded, and my portrayal of the Heidegger–Carnap exchange as a crystallization is overstated, then the possibility nevertheless remains that the continental–analytic divide is actively prompting us to consider a style of philosophy that is distinctive from an (imagined) other.

The debate will run and run. As a collection of texts which are representative of schools and themes, this *Reader* both accepts and supports the idea that there is a continental tradition. Selection, of course, is not an impartial act: it creates or reinforces canons. The idea of continental aesthetics may be a construction but the selection in this volume is built on the notion that it is possible to identify within French, German, and Italian philosophical literature authors and texts which have transformed our understanding of modern art and experience. Furthermore, their combination of argument, performativity, writing from a perspective, stretching of possibilities, and polemic has done more to expand the significance given to aesthetics by nineteenth-century German philosophy than the definitional and truth-conditional interests of analytic aesthetics. Although Kant and Hegel sit quite happily on both analytic and continental curricula, it is only the latter which has seriously addressed the need to rethink how aesthetic experience and meaning might be formed or configured in the light of their metaphysics, and what the ethical, political, and epistemological impact of these configurations might be. Phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical theory, and psychoanalysis are all, at decisive moments, extensions of the premise – running through Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche – that subjectivity and objectivity are abstractions from or epiphenomena emerging from a much more fundamental and complex dynamic. One consequence of the departure from subject–object thought within German aesthetics has been the twentieth century's linguistification of experience: the suggestion that experience does not come to us pure but is shaped and organized into recognizable units by the language we speak. Again, this thesis has been explored in detail by both traditions. However, its more radical implications for the status of aesthetics, the nature of meaning, and the texture of experience are to be found in continental philosophy, in particular poststructuralism and feminism. They emphasize the material properties of language and draw attention to the way in which its web-like network of relationships allows unexpected connections to frustrate our attempts at direct or self-evident meaning. With the renewed interest in ontology, e.g. in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, Badiou, and Nancy, aesthetic experience becomes a centre of intensity or possibility prior to other ontological divisions (such as subject–object, mental–physical, or language–experience), making it a principal force in the creation of ways of being which can resist those shaped by economic or scientific ideologies.

The continental aesthetic tradition offers some of the most stimulating and innovative thinking on art and aesthetic experience in the modern era. Discussions about art and human sensibility are shown to hold valuable insights for the way we apportion meaning and value in our lives. Cartesian thought and capitalism divide fundamental relationships into isolated things, setting subjective experience apart from the objective world and installing a model of truth where the former is subordinate to the latter. Against this, continental aesthetics asks us to consider the phenomenal, historical, and social textures which implicate us in the world, for within them we find the perceptual possibilities and dynamics of interpretation that generate new modes of being and understanding. In the absence of truth, there is only art. The following essays demonstrate this.

Notes

1 S. Critchley, *Continental Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 32.
2 Quoted in Critchley, *Continental Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 34.
3 For a fuller account, see M. Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger*, Peru, Illinois: Open Court, 2000.
4 Ibid., pp. 54–75.
5 S. Glendinning, *The Idea of Continental Philosophy*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.
6 Ibid., p. 3.

PART 1

Nineteenth-Century German Aesthetics

Introduction

THIS PART REPRESENTS THE 'LONG' NINETEENTH CENTURY, starting with the publication of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* in 1790. The three extracts – from Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche – demonstrate the major shifts which take place in aesthetic thought in this period. Aesthetic experience, for the greater part of the history of Western philosophy, is regarded as subordinate to rational enquiry. Traditionally, sensory or aesthetic experience is dismissed as a means to truth, either because it can be confused or indistinct or because it is not amenable to conceptual analysis; both Plato and Descartes offer arguments along these lines. This changes in the eighteenth century when two German thinkers make aesthetics central to philosophy: Alexander Baumgarten (1714–62) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). Baumgarten addresses the charge of confusion. His *Metaphysica* (1739) reconfigures aesthetic confusion as a synthesis ('confusion's field' or *campus confusionis*) and, therefore, as a positive epistemological notion.[1] Whereas rational judgment divides the world into subjects and predicates, aesthetic experience, Baumgarten avers, allows us to perceive these moments as a unified whole.

Kant's writing, however, has overshadowed Baumgarten's contribution. The reason for this, I suggest, is that Kant radically alters the modern European philosophical landscape. The major shift in thought he makes is to acknowledge the finitude of human experience. That is to say, he asserts that human consciousness is not detached from the world but rooted in and actively engaged with it. This is Kant's 'Copernican revolution'. The comparison with Copernicus is made by Kant himself. Just as Copernicus tries to remove the anomalies affecting sixteenth-century astronomy by adopting a new model of the cosmos, so Kant proposes to resolve the problems of metaphysics by offering a new model of the relation between mind and reality:

> Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them a priori, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge.[2]

The subject is made the origin of experience and, from this premise, the conditions of possibility of subjectivity are shown to be, at one and the same time, the conditions of possibility of objectivity. In other words, the structure of my experience and the structure of the world (the fact that it is occupied by perceptually graspable things) are two sides of the same coin. This is Kant's transcendental deduction, the central argument of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. From this, Kant constructs a critical philosophy in which the experience of art plays a pivotal role. Hegel challenges the limits which he thinks Kant imposes on human experience, and places art and thought in an entirely different relationship. For Nietzsche, the philosophies of Kant and Hegel are too systematic, too life-denying, and he impresses upon us a metaphysics of will and transformation, with the aesthetic as a motivating force.

Notes

1 Alexander Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, Halle, 1739. Dual Latin and German extracts from this text appear in *Texte zur Grundlegung der Aesthetik*, ed. H.R. Schweizer, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983.
2 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan, 1929, Bxvi, p. 22. Numbers refer to the pagination of the original Akadamie edition, included in the margin of this translation. 'A' denotes the first edition *Critique* (1781), 'B' the second (1787).

Chapter 1

IMMANUEL KANT

INTRODUCTION

The later philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), the philosophy which brings about the 'Copernican revolution' in thought, is a *critical* system, in a particular sense of the word. His use of the term is allied to his assertion of human finitude. 'Critique', for Kant, refers to an examination of the scope and limits of our cognitive powers; in particular, a demonstration of both the possibility of knowledge within experience and the impossibility of knowledge beyond the limits of experience. As such, it is a reply to the scepticism characteristic of empiricist philosophy and to the dogmatic metaphysics of rationalism. Philosophy, as Kant finds it, is polarized between the rationalism of Descartes, Leibniz, and Baumgarten on the continent and the empiricism of Locke and Hume in Britain. The presuppositions of both systems, Kant observes, ultimately work to undermine them and prevent them from offering coherent theories of knowledge and action. For example, Descartes fails in the *Meditations* (1641) to guarantee clear and distinct ideas, and Hume realizes in the *Treatise* (1740) that an empiricist model of knowledge cannot account for abstract, structural concepts such as causality, number, and the self. Critical philosophy seeks to avoid these problems. Human finitude means that our concepts necessarily open onto the world as it is received by us through sensibility (what Kant calls *die Anschauung* or 'intuition'): 'thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind'.[1] This necessary interrelationship disarms Hume's doubt regarding the justification of our concepts and demonstrates to the rationalist that our categories are not abstractions which can be detached from experience and used to construct dogmatic metaphysical schemes.

Kant's main task is to argue for this interrelationship between mind and reality and, in particular, to explain how objectivity is possible given that the subject has been made the basis of experience. This project occupies all three books which make up Kant's critical system. The *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781, revised 1787) lays the foundations and considers the application of our cognitive powers (or 'reason' (*die Vernunft*) in Kant's broad sense of the term) to experience. The consequences of finitude for morality are considered in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788). Here, Kant faces the question of how a universal moral imperative supplied by reason in advance of experience can serve as a principle for showing us how we ought to act in particular situations.

The *Critique of Judgment* (1790) completes the critical trilogy not just because it is the third and final volume but, more importantly, because it bridges the gap created by the previous two. For example, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant surrenders the operation of the mind which brings pure concepts into relation with empirical intuition as 'an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover'.[2] The gulf which has to be crossed is between the sensible and the supersensible. The supersensible in this context refers to human reason and, in particular, its capacity for *going beyond* what is given in immediate (sensible) experience. While Kant

maintains the philosophical tradition (following Aristotle, Aquinas, and Descartes) of defining reason as the ability to think creatively and act according to principles which are independent of nature, he nevertheless departs from tradition with his claim that the objectivity or validity of these supersensible principles lies not in themselves, in their own terms, but *in their application to sensible reality*. This is the relationship which has to be explained. As a result, Kant faces the question of the interaction between the sensible and the supersensible on two accounts, since reason goes beyond the given in both *theoretical* (or cognitive) and *practical* ways, as argued in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* respectively. The questions which arise are: theoretically, how do (supersensible) pure, transcendental concepts projected in advance of experience accommodate (sensible) empirical intuitions?; and practically, how can a (supersensible) universal moral imperative supplied by reason in advance of experience serve as a principle for showing us how we ought to act in (sensible) particular situations?

In completing the critical project, the *Critique of Judgment* explores those aspects of experience which allow the fullest exposition of the interrelationship between subject and object: art, beauty, and the appearance of design in nature. Aesthetics is not treated in isolation but made central to Kant's entire project, and shown to be directly relevant to moral and epistemological issues. The main question which Kant asks in the third *Critique* is how a *subjective*, aesthetic judgment, a judgment of taste, can claim *universal* assent. Aesthetic judgments are those utterances where we describe something as beautiful or has having special significance, e.g. 'This is a beautiful landscape'; 'This is a powerful work of art'. The problem he finds with these judgments is that, although in one sense they are a description of a personal feeling, they nevertheless appear to make a claim about the object concerned, a claim (about its beauty or aesthetic strength) which *arguably* should hold for everyone. Kant refers to this as the antinomy of taste. How can the contradictory aspects of subjectivity and objectivity be reconciled?

In order to overcome the antinomy, Kant distinguishes between determinative and reflective judgment. This distinction is vital. 'Judgment in general,' he writes, 'is the ability to think the particular under the universal' (*CJ* 179).[3] Determinative judgments, on the one hand, subsume a particular under a universal or, in a more Kantian idiom, an intuition under a concept, and determine an object to be a certain kind of thing, e.g. 'This is a tomato'. Reflective judgments, on the other, do not identify or assign properties to an object. Judgments of taste are reflective: to describe a landscape as 'beautiful' or a piece of music as 'sad' is not to ascribe empirically determinate qualities to the objects. No determination is made by these judgments, Kant maintains, for the simple reason that no definite concept is available to them. (Resistance to conceptualization, we can recall, is the traditional charge made against aesthetic experience by philosophy.) Instead, he argues, our cognitive powers have to *look* for a concept.

Reflective judgment then needs a concept for, in Kantian terms, all experience requires concepts and intuitions, but not a determinate concept. To meet this need, judgment presupposes the *indeterminate* concept of nature's subjective purposiveness (*Zweckmäßigkeit*), the idea that the world appears to us *as if* it had been designed for our awareness:

> Someone who feels pleasure in the mere reflection on the form of an object, without any concern about a concept, rightly lays claim to everyone's assent, even though this judgment is empirical and a singular judgment. For the basis of this pleasure is found in the universal, though subjective, condition of [aesthetic] reflective judgments, namely, the purposive harmony of an object (whether a product of nature or of art) with the mutual relation of the cognitive powers (imagination and understanding) *that are required for every empirical cognition*.
>
> (*CJ* 191, emphasis added)

We experience beauty or aesthetic delight, Kant declares, when we recognize that the order we perceive in the world is a reflection of the order we require for meaningful, intelligible experience. In other words, moments of beauty, for Kant, are moments when we glimpse the conditions of possibility of experience.

Isn't this simply a restatement of the premise that there is a necessary interrelationship between mind and nature? The only way a philosophy which starts from the point of view of the subject can explain objectivity, it would seem, is to make the rather grand assumption that mind and nature simply interlock. Kant is not guilty of this though. To rely on the indeterminate concept of nature's subjective purposiveness, he avers, is not to assume that the laws of nature are the laws of our understanding, 'for it is only reflective [as opposed to determinative] judgment that uses this idea as a principle... In using this principle, judgment gives a law only to itself, not to nature' (*CJ* 180). Kant is *not* asserting that nature has been designed for our awareness, not arguing for the presence of *a particular order* in nature. This distinguishes him from the Enlightenment belief that our categories cut reality at the joints and deliver to us conceptually all that the world can be. Instead, Kant is arguing for the possibility of order, the state of affairs upon which any experiential, intelligible purchase on the world is conditional. Without this, empirical differences 'might still be so great that it would be impossible for our understanding...to divide nature's products into genera and species' (*CJ* 185). Purposiveness, he writes, is

> a principle by which judgment prescribes, not to nature (which would be autonomy) but to itself (which is heautonomy), a law for its reflection on nature... [W]e must think nature, as regards its merely empirical laws, as containing the possibility of an endless diversity of empirical laws that [despite being laws] are nonetheless contingent as far as we can see... And yet we must necessarily presuppose and assume this unity, since otherwise our empirical cognition could not thoroughly cohere to [form] a whole of experience...
>
> (*CJ* 183–86)

By transforming the determinate notion of 'purpose' (*Zweck*) into the indeterminate notion of 'purposiveness' (*Zweckmäßigkeit*), Kant is reconciling another pair of philosophical opposites. Eighteenth-century science was trying to accommodate two world-views: Aristotelian teleology and Renaissance empiricism. Teleology is the study of purpose in nature. It derives from Aristotle's concept of 'final cause' or *telos*. Every inanimate object or organism, Aristotle argues, has a 'natural place' or 'state' and all motion or growth can be explained in terms of transition towards this final state. For example, objects fall to the ground, Aristotle suggests, because the earth is their 'natural state'. The Renaissance though brought the recognition that knowledge could be generated simply by detecting regularity through observation, and much of the evidence of the senses was found to conflict with Aristotle's system, e.g. his theory of the celestial spheres. As a result, Aristotle's influence waned. However, deriving mechanical laws from observed regularities cannot explain the sense of organization found in organisms where parts interact in the interests of the greater whole. Thus the Aristotelian notion of purpose was still a necessary explanatory component. In Kant's system, purposiveness (or the appearance of a purpose) becomes the transcendental principle which explains how the apprehension of regularity in experience is possible.

One question raised by this account is the source of the indeterminate concept of nature's subjective purposiveness. Where does it come from? This is a taxing question for a metaphysics which is trying to extrapolate conditions of possibility from a minimal set of relations between sensibility (phenomenal nature and our sensory being) and supersensibility (noumenal reality or reality as it is in itself and our capacity for free, independent thought and action), and which,

therefore, cannot rely upon a ghost in the machine, an architectonic-saving device that is parachuted in from outside. I said above that judgment 'presupposes' the concept. In writing this, I am following Kant's language. For example, he writes:

> [J]udgment *must assume*, as an a priori principle for its own use, that what to human insight is contingent in the particular (empirical) natural laws does nevertheless contain a law-governed unity, unfathomable but still conceivable by us, in the combination of what is diverse in them to [form] an experience that is intrinsically [*an sich*] possible.
>
> (*CJ* 183–84; emphasis added)

Judgment for Kant, to clarify the term, is one of our cognitive powers, 'a mediating link between understanding and reason' (*CJ* 168). Judgment is exercised by reason, the capacity to think and act according to principles which are independent of nature, applying concepts (from the faculty of the understanding) to sensible intuition, thereby generating ordered, intelligible experience. In completing Kant's critical trilogy, the *Critique of Judgment* attempts to address some of the gaps left by the previous two. Judgment becomes the focus because Kant reasons, by analogy, that it is the 'territory' to explore for laws which can bridge the gaps.[4] However, it would appear the precise nature of the origin of purposiveness remains unresolved. Equating purposiveness with 'the subjective principle [of] the indeterminate idea of the supersensible in us', Kant declares that its source is 'concealed from us', that 'we can do no more than point to it', and 'there is nothing we can do that would allow us to grasp it any further' (*CJ* 340).[5] While it might appear that a gap remains in Kant's system at this crucial point, it is important to note that Kant is sensitive to the boundaries of what can be known and articulated; his critical project is, after all, a study of the limits of reason. There are several declarations within the third *Critique* to the effect that it is beyond reason's grasp what happens at the supersensible level (see, for example, *CJ* 411, 412, 422). This though might sound like an all-too-easy get-out clause: when the architectonic gets tough, just hold up your hands and say it's 'an art concealed in the depths of the human soul'.[6] It cannot be denied that Kant's enquiry has a self-referential aspect: to make a determinate, theoretical proposition about a supersensible source would effectively contradict the aim of the first *Critique*: to demonstrate the possibility of knowledge within experience, and the impossibility of knowledge beyond the limits of experience. However, there are studies which argue that Kant does carry out various 'pointing' and 'grasping' gestures with regard to the supersensible via analogy and his account of 'rational ideas' (of which purposiveness is one), ideas which 'can never become cognition because [they contain] a concept (of the supersensible) for which no adequate intuition can ever be given' (*CJ* 342).[7]

In making my selections from the *Critique of Judgment*, I have chosen extracts which fit together to give an indication of the relationship which the third *Critique* (on art and teleology) has with its predecessors (the first on epistemology and the second on morality). The majority of the sections reproduced here show how the problems posed by aesthetic judgment and the experience of beauty lead to the concept of purposiveness and, more especially, purposiveness as it is displayed in art. Purposiveness, as the 'feeling of freedom in the play of our cognitive powers' (*CJ* 306), is the basis of *the relationship between* mind and nature which *allows us* to bring nature under concepts. It is therefore the term which completes Kant's explanation of finitude from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the necessarily interwoven nature of concept and intuition. There are sections from the 'Analytic of Aesthetic Judgment' and the 'Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment'. The analytic–dialectic structure is common to all three *Critiques*: 'analytic', in this context, refers to what can be said about judgment (bringing an intuition under a concept) *as it applies to experience*; whereas 'dialectic' refers to the transcendental reasoning *beyond experience* Kant

undertakes in order to resolve the antinomies of metaphysics. The 'Analytic' sections outline the significance Kant attaches to fine art, and the contradictory aspects of aesthetic judgments (subjective statements making objective claims) which define the antinomy of taste. Reproduced from the 'Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment' is the solution to the antinomy.

There is still disagreement within Kantian scholarship over the relation between beauty and morality in Kant's critical system. The key issue for some commentators is whether Kant's theory of taste can be regarded as complete and coherent on its own terms, i.e. independently of a theory of reflective judgment, or whether it requires isomorphic links to other parts of his architectonic. Each path leads to a different interpretation of Kant's aesthetics and, more significantly, provides a different account of the universal condition which underpins the normativity of aesthetic judgment. Guyer and Allison maintain (albeit for different reasons)[8] that the universal validity of aesthetic judgment is fully accounted for in epistemological terms. For Guyer, the 'strategy of Kant's deduction of aesthetic judgment' consists in 'the argument that attribution of pleasure to the harmony of the faculties makes it universally valid just because this state is the subjective condition of knowledge in general'.[9] In a comparable vein, Allison argues that the deduction of aesthetic judgment has at its core the argument that the subjective formal conditions of judgment which underlie our liking an object are also the conditions of judgment *per se;* therefore, they can be held to apply to everyone.[10]

In contrast, a number of commentators (e.g. Elliott,[11] Genova,[12] Gotshalk,[13] Kemal,[14] Pluhar,[15] and Rogerson[16]) insist that the normativity of aesthetic judgment cannot be justified purely in epistemological terms and that the universality which is required is in fact supplied by an analogical link to Kant's moral philosophy. These accounts also rely upon and promote the strategies of interpretation which can be applied when Kant's critical philosophy is regarded as a coherent unity. What distinguishes the epistemological interpretation of normativity from the moral approach is the importance which the latter places on §59, the final paragraph of the 'Critique of Aesthetic Judgment' (included here), where Kant asserts that beauty is the symbol of morality. Various suggestions are made as to how the symbolic or analogical link between aesthetics and morality is to be understood. Two examples can be found, one from Kemal and the other from Gotshalk. Emphasis is placed by Kemal on the purposiveness of nature considered heuristically as design by God, where the concept of design or 'technic' is conceived by analogy to the human production of art.[17] On this basis, Kemal argues, 'the beauty of nature [is given] an importance because nature appears to be art, as if it had freedom and a rational will at its base'.[18] A different perspective is offered by Gotshalk, who concentrates upon the analogy between art and morality used by Kant to characterize the expressive, unbounded nature of aesthetic ideas. The connection which Gotshalk makes is that 'since the moral life has a similar aspiration towards achievements of infinite [or unbounded] quality', nature expressed through aesthetic ideas in art therefore can be regarded as presenting 'evidence of a congruence between its [nature's] being and the laws and powers properly guiding our conduct in the realm of freedom'.[19]

The critical trilogy is a very elaborate structure, and its overall coherence as a unified system continues to be the subject of contemporary scholarship. The importance it holds for aesthetics is immense, since it positions the aesthetic as that realm of human experience where we appraise the relationship between the world and our conceptual understanding of it. We enjoy art, literature, and music because they move us subjectively to offer objective judgment, and it is this tension or interplay between subjectivity and objectivity, Kant affirms, which we find in moral reasoning, the construction of knowledge, and, in fact, every waking moment. Thus, the demands made by an artwork on us to find the right words to describe its effect or significance are paradigms for

the conceptual or interpretative decisions which have to be made in moral and epistemological judgments. Fine art, for Kant, is the product of genius. The concept of 'genius' is formulated in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century romanticism (arguably as an extension of the ancient image of the inspired poet and the Renaissance concept of the *divino artista*),[20] and is presented as the capacity of an artist to produce work which transcends the established rules of composition. In Kantian terms, the genius is an artist who can give phenomenal form to 'aesthetic ideas'. An 'aesthetic idea' is 'a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e. no [determinate] concept, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it' (*CJ* 314). The artist-genius can also display some sense of purposiveness through their artwork. 'In [dealing with] a product of fine art,' Kant writes, 'we must become conscious that it is art rather than nature, and yet the purposiveness [the appearance of design or purpose] in its form must seem as free from all constraint of chosen rules as if it were a product of mere nature' (*CJ* 306).

The appearance of art 'as if it were a product of mere nature' would seem to suggest that Kant confines fine art to *mimesis*. This is not the case. While it is true that much eighteenth-century painting seeks to define or perfect beauty in nature, it is important to remember that Kant makes beauty a function of the interplay between our cognitive faculties and the world. Fine art, for Kant, is first and foremost an activity through which we explore the nature of our moral and perceptual contact with the world. This means art and aesthetics become practices in which new alignments between concept and intuition are generated, and can be theorized in Kantian terms on account of the way they force us to reconceptualize what we experience. Kantian appraisals of the revolutions in representation generated by modernism, such as impressionism, fauvism, and cubism, can be given in terms of the concepts we have to import from studies of light, materiality, and movement, for example, in order to describe and appreciate them. The acoustic art (*das Neue Hörspiel*) which emerged from experimentations with radio in 1920s Germany is another example.[21] Here the aesthetic and technical properties of the medium prompt directors to montage sounds, e.g. speech, animal cries, natural sounds of wind and water, machinery, and the noises generated by radio itself, in a way which thwart the listener's stable categorization and placing of the source objects in the world.

Kant also has relevance for postmodern aesthetics. One of the distinctive characteristics of postmodern practice, according to Fredric Jameson, is a complexity of conceptual borrowing and intermingling which frustrates any simple or straightforward assimilation of that practice in the name of a given or predicted end.[22] As a result, in the context of art, the postmodern aesthetic, in Jameson's words, has a 'schizophrenic' effect on its audience, that is to say, the audience is completely and utterly disoriented when, instead of being presented with a familiar, shared narrative, they are confronted by a network of competing styles.[23] Kant's philosophy can be considered here in as much as it offers a framework for dealing with those occasions when our cognitive faculties are overwhelmed or cannot get a purchase on what is in front of them. The position which aesthetic experience holds in Kant's critical framework has also led to interest in his philosophy from philosophers and scientists working in neuroaesthetics.[24]

Notes

1 I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan, 1929, A51, B75, p. 93. Numbers refer to the pagination of the original Akadamie edition, included in the margin of this translation. 'A' denotes the first edition *Critique* (1781), 'B' the second (1787).
2 Ibid., A141, B180–81, pp. 82–83.
3 I. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. W.S. Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987. Numbers refer to the pagination of the original Akadamie edition, included in the margin of this translation.

4 The project of uniting the sensible and the supersensible ultimately leads Kant, in the *Critique of Judgment*, to the problem of reconciling two concepts of the supersensible: the suspersensible substrate of all appearances in accordance with the laws of nature, and the supersensible substrate of our freedom to act in accordance with the moral law; or in other words, the supersensible as the substrate of nature *and* as the substrate of our freedom to act in ways which are not determined by nature. It is by means of analogy that Kant identifies our power of judgment as the principle to which we should turn in order to achieve the desired resolution. He does this in his second introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*. Reviewing his work from the first two *Critiques*, Kant observes that the concepts of nature 'which contain a priori the basis for all theoretical cognition, were found to rest on the legislation of the understanding', and similarly that the concept of freedom 'was found to contain a priori the basis for all practical precepts that are unconditioned by the sensible, and to rest on the legislation of reason' (*CJ* 176). On this basis, he argues,

> we have cause to suppose, by analogy, that [judgment] too may contain a priori, if not a legislation of its own, then at least a principle of its own, perhaps merely a subjective one, by which to search for laws. Even though such a principle would lack a realm of objects as its own domain, it might still have some territory; and this territory might be of such a character that none but this very principle might hold it. (*CJ* 177)

5 For an account of Kant's equation of nature's subjective purposiveness with 'the subjective principle [of] the indeterminate idea of the supersensible in us', see Pluhar's 'Translator's introduction', in I. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. W.S. Pluhar, pp. lxii–lxiii, xciv–xcviii.

6 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A141, B180–81, pp. 82–83.

7 See J. Derrida, 'Parergon' in this volume, and C. Cazeaux, *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy: From Kant to Derrida*, London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 35–55.

8 Allison gives his account of these reasons at H.E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 180–82.

9 P. Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 2nd edition, p. 101.

10 Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, p. 176. These accounts from Guyer and Allison, it should be pointed out, do not amount to the claim that taste and morality are not connected in Kant's philosophy; both accept that a connection exists. What they do deny is that judgments of taste are grounded by the connection between taste and morality.

11 R.K. Elliott, 'The unity of Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgment', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 293–308.

12 A.C. Genova, 'Kant's complex problem of reflective judgment', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, pp. 54–76.

13 D.W. Gotshalk, 'Form and expression in Kant's aesthetics', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, pp. 147–57.

14 S. Kemal, 'The importance of artistic beauty', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, pp. 104–26.

15 Pluhar presents his interpretation of the normativity of aesthetic judgment as part of the introduction to his translation of the *Critique of Judgment*, especially pp. lxi–lxvi.

16 K.F. Rogerson, 'The meaning of universal validity in Kant's aesthetics', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, pp. 309–20.

17 S. Kemal, 'The importance of artistic beauty', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, p. 107.

18 Ibid., p. 118.

19 D.W. Gotshalk, 'Form and expression in Kant's aesthetics', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, pp. 154–55.

20 See P. Murray, *Genius: History of an Idea*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.

21 Good accounts of the development of the *Neue Hörspiel* (although not in any Kantian context) are given in M. Cory, *The Emergence of an Acoustical Artform: An Analysis of the German Experimental Hörspiel of the 1960s*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974, and D. Kahn and G. Whitehead (eds), *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio and the Avant-Garde*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992.

22 F. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, London: Verso, 1991; also *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983–1998,* London: Verso, 1998.

23 F. Jameson, 'Postmodernism and consumer society', *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983–1998*, London: Verso, 1998, p. 3.

24 See, for example, J. McMahon, *Aesthetics and Material Beauty: Aesthetics Naturalized*, New York: Routledge, 2007.

■ ■ ■

EXTRACTS FROM 'ANALYTIC OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT' AND 'DIALECTIC OF AESTHETIC JUDGMENT', *CRITIQUE OF JUDGMENT*

IMMANUEL KANT

§ 32 First peculiarity of a judgment of taste

A judgment of taste determines its object in respect of our liking (beauty) [but] makes a claim to *everyone's* assent, as if it were an objective judgment.

To say, This flower is beautiful, is tantamount to a mere repetition of the flower's own claim
282 to everyone's liking. The agreeableness of its smell, on the other hand, gives it no claim whatever: its smell delights [*ergötzen*] one person, it makes another dizzy. In view of this [difference], must we not suppose that beauty has to be considered a property of the flower itself, which does not adapt itself to differences in people's heads and all their senses, but to which they must adapt themselves if they wish to pass judgment on it? Yet beauty is not a property of the flower itself. For a judgment of taste consists precisely in this, that it calls a thing beautiful only by virtue of that characteristic in which it adapts itself to the way we apprehend it.

Moreover, whenever a subject offers a judgment as proof of his taste [concerning some object], we demand that he judge for himself: he should not have to grope about among other people's judgments by means of experience, to gain instruction in advance from whether they like or dislike that object; so we demand that he pronounce his judgment a priori, that he not make it [by way of] imitation, (say) on the ground that a thing is actually liked universally. One would think, however, that an a priori judgment must contain a concept of the object, this concept containing the principle for cognizing the object. But a judgment of taste is not based on concepts at all, and is not at all a cognition but only an aesthetic judgment.

That is why a young poet cannot be brought to abandon his persuasion that his poem is beautiful, neither by the judgment of his audience nor by that of his friends; and if he listens to them, it is not because he now judges the poem differently, but because, even if (at least with regard to him) the whole audience were to have wrong taste, his desire for approval still causes him to accommodate himself (even against his judgment) to the common delusion. Only later on, when his power of judgment has been sharpened by practice, will he voluntarily depart from his earlier judgment, just as he does with those of his judgments which rest wholly on reason. Taste lays claim merely to autonomy; but to make other people's judgments the basis determining one's own would be heteronomy.

It is true that we extol, and rightly so, the works of the ancients as models, and call their authors classical, as if they form a certain noble class among writers which gives laws to people by the precedent it sets. This seems to point to a posteriori sources of taste and to refute the
283 autonomy of every subject's taste. But we might just as well say: the fact that the ancient mathematicians are to this day considered to be virtually indispensable models of supreme thoroughness and elegance in the synthetic method[1] proves that our reason [only] imitates and is unable on its own to produce rigorous and highly intuitive proofs by constructing concepts.[2] The same holds for all uses, no matter how free, of our powers, including even reason (which must draw all its judgments from the common a priori source): if each subject always had to start from nothing but the crude predisposition given him by nature, [many] of his attempts would fail, if other people before him had not failed in theirs; they did not make these attempts in order to turn their successors into mere imitators, but so that, by their procedure, they might

put others on a track whereby they could search for the principles within themselves and so adopt their own and often better course. In religion, everyone must surely find the rule for his conduct within himself, since he is also the one who remains responsible for his conduct and cannot put the blame for his offenses on others on the ground that they were his teachers and predecessors; yet even here an example of virtue and holiness will always accomplish more than any universal precepts we have received from priests or philosophers, or for that matter found within ourselves. Such an example, set for us in history, does not make dispensable the autonomy of virtue that arises from our own and original (a priori) idea of morality, nor does it transform this idea into a mechanism of imitation. *Following* by reference to a precedent, rather than imitating, is the right term for any influence that products of an exemplary author may have on others; and this means no more than drawing on the same sources from which the predecessor himself drew, and learning from him only how to go about doing so. Among all our abilities and talents, taste is precisely what stands most in need of examples regarding what has enjoyed the longest-lasting approval in the course of cultural progress, in order that it will not become uncouth again and relapse into the crudeness of its first attempts; and taste needs this because its judgment cannot be determined by concepts and precepts.

§ 33 Second peculiarity of a judgment of taste

284

A judgment of taste, just as if it were merely *subjective*, cannot be determined by bases of proof.

If someone does not find a building, a view, or a poem beautiful, then, *first*, he will refuse to let even a hundred voices, all praising it highly, prod him into approving of it inwardly. He may of course act as if he liked it too, so that people will not think that he lacks taste. He may even begin to doubt whether he has in fact done enough to mold his taste, by familiarizing himself with a sufficient number of objects of a certain kind (just as someone who thinks he recognizes a forest in some distant object that everyone else regards as a town will doubt the judgment of his own eyes). And yet he realizes clearly that other people's approval in no way provides him with a valid proof by which to judge beauty; even though others may perhaps see and observe for him, and even though what many have seen the same way may serve him, who believes he saw it differently, as a sufficient basis of proof for a theoretical and hence logical judgment, yet the fact that others have liked something can never serve him as a basis for an aesthetic judgment. If others make a judgment that is unfavorable to us, this may rightly make us wonder about our own judgment, but it can never convince us that ours is incorrect. Hence there is no empirical *basis of proof* that could compel anyone to make [some] judgment of taste.

Second, still less can a judgment about beauty be determined by an a priori proof, in accordance with determinate rules. If someone reads me his poem, or takes me to a play that in the end I simply cannot find to my taste, then let him adduce *Batteux* or *Lessing*[3] to prove that his poem is beautiful, or [bring in] still older and more famous critics of taste with all the rules they have laid down; moreover, let certain passages that I happen to dislike conform quite well to rules of beauty (as laid down by these critics and universally recognized): I shall stop my ears, shall refuse to listen to reasons and arguments, and shall sooner assume that those rules of the critics are false, or at least do not apply in the present case, than allow my judgment to be determined by a priori bases of proof; 285
for it is meant to be a judgment of taste, and not one of the understanding or of reason.

It seems that this is one of the main reasons why this aesthetic power of judging was given that very name: taste. For even if someone lists all the ingredients of a dish, pointing out that I have always found each of them agreeable, and goes on to praise this food – and rightly so – as wholesome, I shall be deaf to all these reasons: I shall try the dish on *my* tongue and palate, and thereby (and not by universal principles) make my judgment.

It is a fact that any judgment of taste we make is always a singular judgment about the object. The understanding can, by comparing the object with other people's judgment about their liking of it, make a universal judgment, e.g.: All tulips are beautiful. But such a judgment is then not a judgment of taste; it is a logical judgment, which turns an object's reference to taste into a predicate of things of a certain general kind. Only a judgment by which I find a singular given tulip beautiful, i.e., in which I find that my liking for the tulip is universally valid, is a judgment of taste. Its peculiarity, however, consists in the fact that, even though it has merely subjective validity, it yet extends its claim to *all* subjects, just as it always could if it were an objective judgment that rested on cognitive bases and that [we] could be compelled [to make] by a proof.

§ 34 An objective principle of taste is impossible

By a principle of taste would be meant a principle under which, as condition, we could subsume the concept of an object and then infer that the object is beautiful. That, however, is absolutely impossible. For I must feel the pleasure directly in my presentation of the object, and I cannot be talked into that pleasure by means of any bases of proof. Hence, although, as *Hume* says, critics can reason more plausibly than cooks,[4] they still share the same fate. They cannot expect the determining basis of their judgment [to come] from the force of the bases of proof, but only from the subject's
286 reflection on his own state (of pleasure or displeasure), all precepts and rules being rejected.

There is, however, something about which critics nonetheless can and should reason, since doing so may serve to correct and broaden our judgments of taste. I do not mean that they should set forth the determining basis of this kind of aesthetic judgments in a universal formula that we could [then] use. What they should do is investigate our cognitive powers and what task these powers perform in these judgments, and they should clarify by examples the reciprocal subjective purposiveness about which it was shown above that its form in a given presentation is the beauty of the object of this presentation. Hence the critique of taste is itself only subjective as regards the presentation by which an object is given us: it is the art, or science, of finding rules for the reciprocal relation that understanding and imagination have in the given presentation (without reference to prior sensation or concept), and hence for their accordance or discordance, and of determining them as regards their conditions. The critique of taste is an *art* if it shows this only through examples; it is a *science* if it derives the possibility of such judging from the nature of these powers as cognitive powers as such. It is with the latter alone, with a transcendental critique, that we are here concerned throughout. Its aim is to set forth and justify the subjective principle of taste as an a priori principle of the power of judgment. The critique that is an art merely takes the physiological (in this case psychological) and hence empirical rules by which taste actually proceeds, and (without thinking about [how] they are possible) seeks to apply them to our judging of objects of taste; and it criticizes the products of fine art, just as the *transcendental* critique criticizes our very ability to judge them.

§ 35 The principle of taste is the subjective principle of the power of judgment as such

A judgment of taste differs from a logical one in that a logical judgment subsumes a presentation under concepts of the object, whereas a judgment of taste does not subsume it under any concept at all, since otherwise the necessary universal approval could be [obtained] by compelling [people to give it]. But a judgment of taste does resemble a logical judgment inasmuch as it
287 alleges a universality and necessity, though a universality and necessity that is not governed by concepts of the object and hence is merely subjective. Now since the concepts in a judgment

constitute its content (what belongs to the cognition of the object), while a judgment of taste cannot be determined by concepts, its basis is only the subjective formal condition of a judgment as such. The subjective condition of all judgments is our very ability to judge, i.e., the power of judgment. When we use this power of judgment in regard to a presentation by which an object is given, then it requires that there be a harmony between two presentational powers, imagination (for the intuition and the combination of its manifold) and understanding (for the concept that is the presentation of the unity of this combination). Now since a judgment of taste is not based on a concept of the object (in the case of a presentation by which an object is given), it can consist only in the subsumption of the very imagination under the condition [which must be met] for the understanding to proceed in general from intuition to concepts. In other words, since the imagination's freedom consists precisely in its schematizing[5] without a concept, a judgment of taste must rest upon a mere sensation,[6] namely, our sensation of both the imagination in its *freedom* and the understanding with its *lawfulness*, as they reciprocally quicken each other; i.e., it must rest on a feeling that allows us to judge the object by the purposiveness that the presentation (by which an object is given) has insofar as it furthers the cognitive powers in their free play. Hence taste, as a subjective power of judgment, contains a principle of subsumption; however, this subsumption is not one of intuitions under *concepts*, but, rather, one of the *power* of intuitions or exhibitions (the imagination) under the *power* of concepts (the understanding), insofar as the imagination *in its freedom* harmonizes with the understanding *in its lawfulness*.

In attempting to discover this legitimating basis by means of a deduction of judgments of taste, we can use as our guide only the formal peculiarities of this kind of judgments, i.e., we must consider merely their logical form.

§ 36 On the problem of a deduction of judgments of taste

With the perception of an object we can directly connect the concept of an object as such, [for] which it contains the empirical predicates, in order to give rise to a cognitive judgment. This 288
is how an empirical judgment is produced.[7] Now this judgment is based on a priori concepts of the systematic unity of the manifold of intuition; hence we can think this manifold as the determination of an object. These concepts (the categories) require a deduction, and this was indeed provided in the *Critique of Pure Reason*,[8] which thus made it possible to solve the problem: How are synthetic cognitive judgments possible a priori? That problem, then, concerned the pure understanding's a priori principles and theoretical judgments.

But we can also directly connect with a perception a feeling of pleasure (or displeasure) and a liking that accompanies the object's presentation and serves it in the place of a predicate. This is how an aesthetic judgment arises, which is not a cognitive judgment. Now if an aesthetic judgment is not a mere judgment of sensation, but a formal judgment of reflection that requires this liking from everyone as necessary, then it must be based on something as its a priori principle. This principle may well be merely subjective (in case an objective one were to be impossible for judgments of this kind), but even then it requires a deduction, in order that we may grasp how an aesthetic judgment can lay claim to necessity. And that is the basis of the problem with which we are now dealing: How are judgments of taste possible? So this problem concerns the a priori principles that the pure power of judgment [uses when it makes] *aesthetic* judgments, i.e., judgments where it does not (as it does in theoretical judgments) merely have to subsume under objective concepts of the understanding, [so that] it is subject to a law,[9] but where it is, subjectively, object to itself as well as law to itself.

We can also think of this problem as follows: How is a judgment possible in which the subject, merely on the basis of his *own* feeling of pleasure in an object, independently of the object's

concept, judges this pleasure as one attaching to the presentation of that same object *in all other subjects*, and does so a priori, i.e., without being allowed to wait for other people's assent?

We can readily see that judgments of taste are synthetic; for they go beyond the concept of the object, and even beyond the intuition of the object, and add as a predicate to this intuition
289 something that is not even cognition: namely [a] feeling of pleasure (or displeasure). And yet, that these judgments are, or want to be considered, a priori judgments as regards the demand that *everyone* assent, a demand they make despite the fact that their predicate (of one's *own* pleasure [as] connected with the presentation) is empirical, is also already implicit in the expressions used to make that claim. Hence this problem of the critique of judgment is part of the general problem of transcendental philosophy: How are synthetic judgments possible a priori?[10]

§ 37 What is actually asserted a priori about an object in a judgment of taste?

That the presentation of an object is directly connected with a pleasure can only be perceived inwardly, and if we wished to indicate no more than this, the result would be a merely empirical judgment. For I cannot connect a priori a definite feeling (of pleasure or displeasure) with any presentation, except in the case where an underlying a priori principle in reason determines the will; but in that case the pleasure (in moral feeling) is the consequence of that principle, and that is precisely why it is not at all comparable to the pleasure in taste: for it requires a determinate concept of a law, whereas the pleasure in taste is to be connected directly with our mere judging, prior to any concept. That is also why all judgments of taste are singular judgments, because they do not connect their predicate, the liking, with a concept but connect it with a singular empirical presentation that is given.

Hence it is not the pleasure, but *the universal validity of this pleasure*, perceived as connected in the mind with our mere judging of an object, that we present a priori as [a] universal rule for the power of judgment, valid for everyone. That I am perceiving and judging an object with pleasure is an empirical judgment. But that I find the object beautiful, i.e., that I am entitled to require that liking from everyone as necessary, is an a priori judgment.

§ 38 Deduction of judgments of taste[11]

If it is granted that in a pure judgment of taste our liking for the object is connected with our mere judging of the form of the object, then this liking is nothing but [our consciousness of] the form's subjective purposiveness for the power of judgment, which we feel as connected
290 in the mind with the presentation of the object. Now, as far as the formal rules of judging [as such] are concerned, apart from any matter (whether sensation or concept), the power of judgment can be directed only to the subjective conditions for our employment of the power of judgment as such (where it is confined neither to the particular kind of sense involved nor to a[ny] particular concept of the understanding), and hence can be directed only to that subjective [condition] which we may presuppose in all people (as required for possible cognition as such). It follows that we must be entitled to assume a priori that a presentation's harmony with these conditions of the power of judgment is valid for everyone. In other words, it seems that when, in judging an object of sense in general, we feel this pleasure, or subjective purposiveness of the presentation for the relation between our cognitive powers, we must be entitled to require this pleasure from everyone.[12]

Comment

What makes this deduction so easy is that it does not need to justify the objective reality of a concept; for beauty is not a concept of an object, and a judgment of taste is not a cognitive judgment. All it asserts is that we are justified in presupposing universally in all people the same subjective conditions of the power of judgment that we find in ourselves; apart from this it asserts only that we have subsumed the given object correctly under these conditions.[14] It is true that this latter assertion involves unavoidable difficulties that do not attach to the logical power of judgment (since there we subsume under concepts, whereas in the aesthetic power of judgment we subsume under a relation 291
of imagination and understanding, as they harmonize with each other in the presented form of an object, that can only be sensed, so that the subsumption may easily be illusory [*trügen*]). But this does not in any way detract from the legitimacy of the power of judgment's claim in counting on universal assent, a claim that amounts to no more than this: that the principle of judging validly for everyone from subjective bases is correct. For as far as the difficulty and doubt concerning the correctness of the subsumption under that principle is concerned, no more doubt is cast on the legitimacy of the claim that aesthetic judgments as such have this validity, and hence is cast on the principle itself, than the principle of the logical power of judgment, a principle that is objective, is made doubtful by the fact that [sometimes] (though not so often and so easily) this power's subsumption under its principle is faulty as well. But if the question were, How is it possible to assume a priori that nature is a sum [*Inbegriff*] of objects of taste? that problem would have to do with teleology. For if nature offered forms that are purposive for our power of judgment, then this would have to be regarded as a purpose of nature belonging essentially to its concept. But whether this assumption is correct is as yet very doubtful, while the actuality of natural beauties is patent to experience.

* * *

§ 44 On fine art

There is no science of the beautiful [*das Schöne*], but only critique; and there is no fine [*schön*] science,[15] but only fine art. For in a science of the beautiful, whether or not something should 305
be considered beautiful would have to be decided scientifically, i.e., through bases of proof, so that if a judgment about beauty belonged to science then it would not be a judgment of taste. As for a fine science: a science that as a science is to be fine is an absurdity; for if, [treating it] as a science, we asked for reasons and proofs, we would be put off with tasteful phrases (*bons mots*). What has given rise to the familiar expression, *fine sciences*, is doubtless nothing more than the realization, which is quite correct, that fine art in its full perfection requires much science: e.g., we must know ancient languages, we must have read the authors considered classical, we must know history and be familiar with the antiquities, etc.; and this is why these historical sciences have, through a confusion of words, themselves come to be called fine sciences, because they constitute the foundation and preparation needed for fine art, and in part also because they have come to include even a familiarity with the products of fine art (as in oratory or poetry).

If art merely performs the acts that are required to make a possible object actual, adequately to our *cognition* of that object, then it is *mechanical* art; but if what it intends directly is [to arouse] the feeling of pleasure, then it is called *aesthetic* art. The latter is either *agreeable* or *fine* art. It is agreeable art if its purpose is that the pleasure should accompany presentations that are mere *sensations*; it is fine art if its purpose is that the pleasure should accompany presentations that are *ways of cognizing*.

Agreeable arts are those whose purpose is merely enjoyment. They include [the art of providing] all those charms that can gratify a party at table, such as telling stories entertainingly,

animating the group to open and lively conversation, or using jest and laughter to induce a certain cheerful tone among them[16] – a tone such that, as is said, there may be a lot of loose talk over the feast, and no one wants to be held responsible for what he says, because the whole point is the entertainment of the moment, not any material for future meditation or quotation. (Such arts also include the art of furnishing a table so that people will enjoy themselves, or include, at large banquets, presumably even the table-music – a strange thing which is meant to be only an agreeable noise serving to keep the minds in a cheerful mood, and which fosters the free flow of conversation between each person and his neighbor, without anyone's paying the slightest
306 attention to the music's composition.) Also included in these arts are any games that involve no further interest than that of making time go by unnoticed.

Fine art, on the other hand, is a way of presenting that is purposive on its own and that furthers, even though without a purpose, the culture of our mental powers to [facilitate] social communication.

The very concept of the universal communicability of a pleasure carries with it [the requirement] that this pleasure must be a pleasure of reflection rather than one of enjoyment arising from mere sensation. Hence aesthetic art that is also fine art is one whose standard is the reflective power of judgment, rather than sensation proper.[17]

§ 45 Fine art is an art insofar as it seems at the same time to be nature

In [dealing with] a product of fine art we must become conscious that it is art rather than nature, and yet the purposiveness in its form must seem as free from all constraint of chosen rules as if it were a product of mere nature. It is this feeling of freedom in the play of our cognitive powers, a play that yet must also be purposive, which underlies that pleasure which alone is universally communicable although not based on concepts. Nature, we say, is beautiful [*schön*] if it also looks like art; and art can be called fine [*schön*] art only if we are conscious that it is art while yet it looks to us like nature.

For we may say universally, whether it concerns beauty in nature or in art: *beautiful is what we like in merely judging it* (rather than either in sensation proper or through a concept). Now art always has a determinate intention to produce something. But if this something were mere sensation (something merely subjective), to be accompanied by pleasure, then we would [indeed] like this product in judging it, [but] only by means of the feeling of sense. If the intention were directed at producing a determinate object and were achieved by the art, then we would like the object only through concepts. In neither case, then, would we like the art in *merely judging it*, i.e., we would like it not as fine but only as mechanical art.

Therefore, even though the purposiveness in a product of fine art is intentional, it must
307 still not seem intentional; i.e., fine art must have the *look* of nature even though we are conscious of it as art. And a product of art appears like nature if, though we find it to agree quite *punctiliously* with the rules that have to be followed for the product to become what it is intended to be, it does not do so *painstakingly*. In other words, the academic form must not show; there must be no hint that the rule was hovering before the artist's eyes and putting fetters on his mental powers.

§ 46 Fine art is the art of genius

Genius is the talent (natural endowment) that gives the rule to art. Since talent is an innate productive ability of the artist and as such belongs itself to nature, we could also put it this way: *Genius* is the innate mental predisposition (*ingenium*) *through which* nature gives the rule to art.

Whatever the status of this definition may be, and whether or not it is merely arbitrary, or rather adequate to the concept that we usually connect with the word *genius* (these questions will be discussed in the following section), still we can prove even now that, in terms of the meaning of the word genius adopted here, fine arts must necessarily be considered arts of *genius*.

For every art presupposes rules, which serve as the foundation on which a product, if it is to be called artistic, is thought of as possible in the first place. On the other hand, the concept of fine art does not permit a judgment about the beauty of its product to be derived from any rule whatsoever that has a *concept* as its determining basis, i.e., the judgment must not be based on a concept of the way in which the product is possible. Hence fine art cannot itself devise the rule by which it is to bring about its product. Since, however, a product can never be called art unless it is preceded by a rule, it must be nature in the subject (and through the attunement of his powers) that gives the rule to art; in other words, fine art is possible only as the product of genius.

What this shows is the following: (1) Genius is a *talent* for producing something for which no determinate rule can be given, not a predisposition consisting of a skill for something that 308
can be learned by following some rule or other; hence the foremost property of genius must be *originality*. (2) Since nonsense too can be original, the products of genius must also be models, i.e., they must be *exemplary*; hence, though they do not themselves arise through imitation, still they must serve others for this, i.e., as a standard or rule by which to judge. (3) Genius itself cannot describe or indicate scientifically how it brings about its products, and it is rather as *nature* that it gives the rule. That is why, if an author owes a product to his genius, he himself does not know how he came by the ideas for it; nor is it in his power [*Gewalt*] to devise such products at his pleasure, or by following a plan, and to communicate [his procedure] to others in precepts that would enable them to bring about like products. (Indeed, that is presumably why the word genius is derived from [Latin] *genius*, [which means] the guardian and guiding spirit that each person is given as his own at birth,[18] and to whose inspiration [*Eingebung*] those original ideas are due.) (4) Nature, through genius, prescribes the rule not to science but to art, and this also only insofar as the art is to be fine art.

§ 47 Elucidation and confirmation of the above explication of genius

On this point everyone agrees: that genius must be considered the very opposite of a *spirit of imitation*. Now since learning is nothing but imitation, even the greatest competence, [i.e.,] teachability (capacity) *qua* teachability, can still not count as genius. But even if someone does not just take in what others have thought but thinks and writes on his own, or even makes all sorts of discoveries in art and science, still, even that is not yet the right basis for calling such a *mind* (in contrast to one who is called a *simpleton*, because he can never do more than just learn and imitate) a *genius* (great though such a mind often is). For all of this *could* in fact have been done through learning as well, and hence lies in the natural path of an investigation and meditation by rules and does not differ in kind from what a diligent person can acquire by means of imitation. Thus one can indeed learn everything that *Newton* has set forth in his immortal work on the principles of natural philosophy, however great a mind was needed to make such discoveries; but one cannot learn to write inspired[19] poetry, however elaborate all the precepts of this art may be, and however superb its models. The reason for this is that Newton could show how he took every one of the 309
steps he had to take in order to get from the first elements of geometry to his great and profound discoveries; he could show this not only to himself but to everyone else as well, in an intuitive[ly clear] way, allowing others to follow. But no *Homer* or *Wieland*[20] can show how his ideas, rich in fancy and yet also in thought, arise and meet in his mind; the reason is that he himself does not

know, and hence also cannot teach it to anyone else. In scientific matters, therefore, the greatest discoverer differs from the most arduous imitator and apprentice only in degree, whereas he differs in kind from someone whom nature has endowed for fine art. But saying this does not disparage those great men, to whom the human race owes so much, in contrast to those whom nature has favored with a talent for fine art. For the scientists' talent lies in continuing to increase the perfection of our cognitions and of all the benefits that depend on [these], as well as in imparting that same knowledge to others; and in these respects they are far superior to those who merit the honor of being called geniuses. For the latter's art stops at some point, because a boundary is set for it beyond which it cannot go and which probably has long since been reached and cannot be extended further. Moreover, the artist's skill cannot be communicated but must be conferred directly on each person by the hand of nature. And so it dies with him, until some day nature again endows someone else in the same way, someone who needs nothing but an example in order to put the talent of which he is conscious to work in a similar way.

Since, then, [the artist's] natural endowment must give the rule to (fine) art, what kind of rule is this? It cannot be couched in a formula and serve as a precept, for then a judgment about the beautiful could be determined according to concepts. Rather, the rule must be abstracted from what the artist has done, i.e., from the product, which others may use to test their own talent, letting it serve them as their model, not to be *copied* [*Nachmachung*] but to be *imitated* [*Nachahmung*].[21] How that is possible is difficult to explain. The artist's ideas arouse similar ideas in his apprentice if nature has provided the latter with a similar proportion in his mental powers.
310 That is why the models of fine art are the only means of transmitting these ideas to posterity. Mere descriptions could not accomplish this (especially not in the area of the arts of speech), and even in these arts only those models can become classical which are written in the ancient, dead languages, now preserved only as scholarly languages.[22]

Even though mechanical and fine art are very different from each other, since the first is based merely on diligence and learning but the second on genius, yet there is no fine art that does not have as its essential condition something mechanical, which can be encompassed by rules and complied with, and hence has an element of *academic correctness*. For something must be thought, as purpose, since otherwise the product cannot be ascribed to any art at all, but would be a mere product of chance. But directing the work to a purpose requires determinate rules that one is not permitted to renounce. Now since originality of talent is one essential component (though not the only one) of the character of genius, shallow minds believe that the best way to show that they are geniuses in first bloom is by renouncing all rules of academic constraint, believing that they will cut a better figure on the back of an ill-tempered than of a training-horse. Genius can only provide rich *material* for products of fine art; processing this material and giving it *form* requires a talent that is academically trained, so that it may be used in a way that can stand the test of the power of judgment. But it is utterly ridiculous for someone to speak and decide like a genius even in matters that require the most careful rational investigation. One does not quite know whether to laugh harder at the charlatan who spreads all this haze, in which we can judge nothing distinctly but can imagine all the more, or rather laugh at the audience, which naively imagines that the reason why it cannot distinctly recognize and grasp this masterpiece of insight is that large masses of new truths are being hurled at it, whereas it regards the detail (which is based on carefully weighed explications and academically correct examination of the principles) as only the work of a bungler.

311 ## § 48 On the relation of genius to taste

Judging beautiful objects to be such requires *taste;* but fine art itself, i.e., *production* of such objects, requires *genius*.

If we consider genius as the talent for fine art (and the proper meaning of the word implies this) and from this point of view wish to analyze it into the powers that must be combined in order to constitute such a talent, then we must begin by determining precisely how natural beauty, the judging of which requires only taste, differs from artistic beauty, whose possibility (which we must also bear in mind when we judge an object of this sort) requires genius.

A natural beauty is a *beautiful thing;* artistic beauty is a *beautiful presentation* of a thing.

In order to judge a natural beauty to be that, I need not have a prior concept of what kind of thing the object is [meant] to be; i.e., I do not have to know its material purposiveness (its purpose). Rather, I like the mere form of the object when I judge it, on its own account and without knowing the purpose. But if the object is given as a product of art, and as such is to be declared beautiful, then we must first base it on a concept of what the thing is [meant] to be, since art always presupposes a purpose in the cause (and its causality). And since the harmony of a thing's manifold with an intrinsic determination of the thing, i.e., with its purpose, is the thing's perfection, it follows that when we judge artistic beauty we shall have to assess the thing's perfection as well, whereas perfection is not at all at issue when we judge natural beauty (to be that). It is true that when we judge certain objects of nature, above all animate ones, such as a human being or a horse, we do commonly also take into account their objective purposiveness in order to judge their beauty. But then, by the same token, the judgment is no longer purely aesthetic, no longer a mere judgment of taste. We then judge nature no longer as it appears as art, but insofar as it actually *is* art (though superhuman art), and [so we make a] teleological judgment that serves the aesthetic one as a foundation and condition that it must 312
take into account. Thus if we say, e.g., That is a beautiful woman, we do in fact think nothing other than that nature offers us in the woman's figure a beautiful presentation of the purposes [inherent] in the female build. For in order to think the object in this way, through a logically conditioned aesthetic judgment, we have to look beyond the mere form and toward a concept.

Fine art shows its superiority precisely in this, that it describes things beautifully that in nature we would dislike or find ugly.[23] The Furies, diseases, devastations of war, and so on are all harmful; and yet they can be described, or even presented in a painting, very beautifully. There is only one kind of ugliness that cannot be presented in conformity with nature without obliterating all aesthetic liking and hence artistic beauty: that ugliness which arouses *disgust*. For in that strange sensation, which rests on nothing but imagination, the object is presented as if it insisted, as it were, on our enjoying it even though that is just what we are forcefully resisting; and hence the artistic presentation of the object is no longer distinguished in our sensation from the nature of this object itself, so that it cannot possibly be considered beautiful. The art of sculpture, too, has excluded from its creations any direct presentation of ugly objects, since in its products art is almost confused with nature. Instead it has permitted [ugly objects] to be presented by an allegory – e.g., death ([by] a beautiful genius) or a warlike spirit ([by] Mars) – or by attributes that come across as likable, and hence has permitted them only to be presented indirectly and by means of an interpretation of reason rather than presented for a merely aesthetic power of judgment.

Let this suffice for the beautiful presentation of an object, which is actually only the form of a concept's exhibition, the form by which this concept is universally communicated. Now, giving this form to a product of fine art requires merely taste. The artist, having practiced and corrected his taste by a variety of examples from art or nature, holds his work up to it, and, after many and often laborious attempts to satisfy his taste, finds that form which is adequate to it. Hence this form is not, as it were, a matter of inspiration or of a free momentum of the mental powers; the artist is, instead, slowly and rather pains-takingly touching the form up in an attempt to make it adequate to his thought while yet keeping it from interfering with the 313
freedom in the play of these powers.

But taste is merely an ability to judge, not to produce; and if something conforms to it, that [fact] does not yet make the thing a work of fine art: it may belong to useful and mechanical art, or even to science, as a product made according to determinate rules that can be learned and that must be complied with precisely. If this product has been given a likable form, then this form is only the vehicle of communication, and, as it were, a manner [adopted] in displaying the product, so that one still retains a certain measure of freedom in this display even though it is otherwise tied to a determinate purpose. Thus we demand that tableware, or, for that matter, a moral treatise, or even a sermon should have this form of fine art, yet without its seeming *studied*, but we do not on that account call these things works of fine art. In fine art we include, rather, a poem, a piece of music, a gallery of pictures, and so on; and here we often find a would-be work of fine art that manifests genius without taste, or another that manifests taste without genius.

§ 49 On the powers of the mind which constitute genius

Of certain products that are expected to reveal themselves at least in part to be fine art, we say that they have no *spirit*, even though we find nothing to censure in them as far as taste is concerned. A poem may be quite nice and elegant and yet have no spirit. A story may be precise and orderly and yet have no spirit. An oration may be both thorough and graceful and yet have no spirit. Many conversations are entertaining, but they have no spirit. Even about some woman we will say that she is pretty, communicative, and polite, but that she has no spirit. Well, what do we mean here by spirit?

Spirit [*Geist*] in an aesthetic sense is the animating principle in the mind.[24] But what this principle uses to animate [or quicken] the soul, the material it employs for this, is what imparts to the mental powers a purposive momentum, i.e., imparts to them a play which is such that it sustains itself on its own and even strengthens the powers for such play.

314 Now I maintain that this principle is nothing but the ability to exhibit *aesthetic ideas*; and by an aesthetic idea I mean a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e., no [determinate] *concept*, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it.[25] It is easy to see that an aesthetic idea is the counterpart (pendant) of a *rational idea*, which is, conversely, a concept to which no *intuition* (presentation of the imagination) can be adequate.

For the imagination ([in its role] as a productive cognitive power) is very mighty when it creates,[26] as it were, another nature out of the material that actual nature gives it. We use it to entertain ourselves when experience strikes us as overly routine. We may even restructure experience; and though in doing so we continue to follow analogical laws, yet we also follow principles which reside higher up, namely, in reason (and which are just as natural to us as those which the understanding follows in apprehending empirical nature). In this process we feel our freedom from the law of association (which attaches to the empirical use of the imagination); for although it is under that law that nature lends us material, yet we can process that material into something quite different, namely, into something that surpasses nature.

Such presentations of the imagination we may call *ideas*. One reason for this is that they do at least strive toward something that lies beyond the bounds of experience, and hence try to approach an exhibition of rational concepts (intellectual ideas), and thus [these concepts] are given a semblance of objective reality. Another reason, indeed the main reason, for calling those presentations ideas is that they are inner intuitions to which no concept can be completely adequate. A poet ventures to give sensible expression to rational ideas of invisible beings, the realm of the blessed, the realm of hell, eternity, creation, and so on. Or, again, he takes [things] that are indeed exemplified in experience, such as death, envy, and all the other vices, as well as love, fame, and so on; but then,

by means of an imagination that emulates the example of reason in reaching [for] a maximum, he ventures to give these sensible expression in a way that goes beyond the limits of experience, namely, with a completeness for which no example can be found in nature. And it is actually in the art of poetry that the power [i.e., faculty] of aesthetic ideas can manifest itself to full extent. Considered by itself, however, this power is actually only a talent (of the imagination).

Now if a concept is provided with [*unterlegen*] a presentation of the imagination such that, even 315
though this presentation belongs to the exhibition of the concept, yet it prompts, even by itself, so much thought as can never be comprehended within a determinate concept and thereby the presentation aesthetically expands the concept itself in an unlimited way, then the imagination is creative in [all of] this and sets the power of intellectual ideas (i.e., reason) in motion: it makes reason think more, when prompted by a [certain] presentation, than what can be apprehended and made distinct in the presentation (though the thought does pertain to the concept of the object [presented]).

If forms do not constitute the exhibition of a given concept itself, but are only supplementary [*Neben-*] presentations of the imagination, expressing the concept's implications and its kinship with other concepts, then they are called (aesthetic) *attributes* of an object, of an object whose concept is a rational idea and hence cannot be exhibited adequately. Thus Jupiter's eagle with the lightning in its claws is an attribute of the mighty king of heaven, and the peacock is an attribute of heaven's stately queen. [Through] these attributes, unlike [through] *logical attributes*, [we] do not present the content of our concepts of the sublimity and majesty of creation, but present something different, something that prompts the imagination to spread over a multitude of kindred presentations that arouse more thought than can be expressed in a concept determined by words. These aesthetic attributes yield an *aesthetic idea*, which serves the mentioned rational idea as a substitute for a logical exhibition, but its proper function is to quicken [*beleben*] the mind by opening up for it a view into an immense realm of kindred presentations. Fine art does this not only in painting or sculpture (where we usually speak of attributes); but poetry and oratory also take the spirit that animates [*beleben*] their works solely from the aesthetic attributes of the objects, attributes that accompany the logical ones and that give the imagination a momentum which makes it think more in response to these objects [*dabei*], though in an undeveloped way, than can be comprehended within one concept and hence in one determinate linguistic expression. Here are some examples, though for the sake of brevity I must confine myself to only a few.

The great king, in one of his poems, expresses himself thus:

Let us part from life without grumbling or regrets,
Leaving the world behind filled with our good deeds.
Thus the sun, his daily course completed,
Spreads one more soft light over the sky;
And the last rays that he sends through the air
Are the last sighs he gives the world for its well-being.[27] 316

The king is here animating his rational idea of a cosmopolitan attitude, even at the end of life, by means of an attribute which the imagination (in remembering all the pleasures of a completed beautiful summer day, which a serene evening calls to mind) conjoins with that presentation, and which arouses a multitude of sensations and supplementary presentations for which no expression can be found. On the other hand, even an intellectual concept may serve, conversely, as an attribute of a presentation of sense and thus animate that presentation by the idea of the supersensible; but [we] may use for this only the aesthetic [element] that attaches subjectively to our consciousness of the supersensible. Thus, for example, a certain poet, in describing a beautiful morning, says: 'The sun flowed forth, as serenity flows from virtue.'[28] The consciousness of

virtue, even if we only think of ourselves as in the position of a virtuous person, spreads in the mind a multitude of sublime and calming feelings and a boundless outlook toward a joyful future, such as no expression commensurate with a determinate concept completely attains.[29]

In a word, an aesthetic idea is a presentation of the imagination which is conjoined with a given concept and is connected, when we use imagination in its freedom, with such a multiplicity of partial presentations that no expression that stands for a determinate concept can be found for it. Hence it is a presentation that makes us add to a concept the thoughts of much that is ineffable, but the feeling of which quickens our cognitive powers and connects language, which otherwise would be mere letters, with spirit.

So the mental powers whose combination (in a certain relation) constitutes *genius* are imagination and understanding. One qualification is needed, however. When the imagination is used for cognition, then it is under the constraint of the understanding and is subject to the restriction of adequacy to the understanding's concept. But when the aim is aesthetic, then
317 the imagination is free, so that, over and above that harmony with the concept, it may supply, in an unstudied way, a wealth of undeveloped material for the understanding which the latter disregarded in its concept. But the understanding employs this material not so much objectively, for cognition, as subjectively, namely, to quicken the cognitive powers, though indirectly this does serve cognition too. Hence genius actually consists in the happy relation – one that no science can teach and that cannot be learned by any diligence – allowing us, first, to discover ideas for a given concept, and, second, to hit upon a way of *expressing* these ideas that enables us to communicate to others, as accompanying a concept, the mental attunement that those ideas produce. The second talent is properly the one we call spirit. For in order to express what is ineffable in the mental state accompanying a certain presentation and to make it universally communicable – whether the expression consists in language or painting or plastic art – we need an ability [viz., spirit] to apprehend the imagination's rapidly passing play and to unite it in a concept that can be communicated without the constraint of rules (a concept that on that very account is original, while at the same time it reveals a new rule that could not have been inferred from any earlier principles or examples).

If, after this analysis, we look back to the above explication of what we call *genius*, we find: *First*, genius is a talent for art, not for science, where we must start from distinctly known rules that determine the procedure we must use in it. *Second,* since it is an artistic talent, it presupposes a determinate concept of the product, namely, its purpose; hence genius presupposes understanding, but also a presentation (though an indeterminate one) of the material, i.e., of the intuition, needed to exhibit this concept, and hence presupposes a relation of imagination to understanding. *Third,* it manifests itself not so much in the fact that the proposed purpose is achieved in exhibiting a determinate concept, as, rather, in the way *aesthetic ideas,* which contain a wealth of material [suitable] for that intention, are offered or expressed; and hence it presents the imagination in its freedom from any instruction by rules, but still as purposive for exhibiting the given concept. Finally, *fourth,* the unstudied, unintentional subjective purposiveness in the imagination's free harmony with the understanding's lawfulness presupposes such a proportion and attunement of these powers as cannot be brought about by any compliance with rules, whether of science or of mechanical imitation, but can be brought about only by the subject's nature.

These presuppositions being given, genius is the exemplary originality of a subject's natural endowment in the *free* use of his cognitive powers. Accordingly, the product of a genius (as regards what is attributable to genius in it rather than to possible learning or academic instruction) is an example that is meant not to be imitated, but to be followed by another genius. (For in mere imitation the element of genius in the work – what constitutes its spirit – would be lost.) The other genius, who follows the example, is aroused by it to a feeling of his own originality, which

allows him to exercise in art his freedom from the constraint of rules, and to do so in such a way that art itself acquires a new rule by this, thus showing that the talent is exemplary. But since a genius is nature's favorite and so must be regarded as a rare phenomenon, his example gives rise to a school for other good minds, i.e., a methodical instruction by means of whatever rules could be extracted from those products of spirit and their peculiarity; and for these [followers] fine art is to that extent imitation, for which nature, through a genius, gave the rule.

But this imitation becomes *aping* if the pupil *copies* everything, including even the deformities that the genius had to permit only because it would have been difficult to eliminate them without diminishing the force of the idea. This courage [to retain deformities] has merit only in a genius. A certain *boldness* of expression, and in general some deviation from the common rule, is entirely fitting for a genius; it is however not at all worthy of imitation, but in itself always remains a defect that [any]one must try to eliminate, though the genius has, as it were, a privilege to allow the defect to remain [anyway], because the inimitable [element] in the momentum of his spirit would be impaired by timorous caution. *Mannerism* is a different kind of aping; it consists in aping mere *peculiarity* (originality) as such, so as to distance oneself as far as at all possible from imitators, yet without possessing the talent needed to be *exemplary* as well. It is true that we use the term *manner*[31] in another way as well: Whenever we convey our thoughts, there are two ways (*modi*) of arranging them, and one of these is called *manner* (*modus aestheticus*), the other *method* (*modus logicus*);[32] the difference between these two is that the first has no standard other than the *feeling* that there is unity in the exhibition [of the thoughts], whereas the second follows in [all of] this determinate *principles;* hence only the first applies to fine art. But in art a product is called *mannered* only if the way the artist conveys his idea *aims* at singularity and is not adequate to the idea. Whatever is ostentatious (precious), stilted, and affected, with the sole aim of differing from the ordinary (but without spirit), resembles the behavior of those who, as we say, listen to themselves talking, or who stand and walk as if they were on a stage so as to be gaped at, behavior that always betrays a bungler.

* * *

§ 56 Presentation of the antinomy of taste 338

There are two commonplaces about taste. The following proposition contains the first of these and is used by everyone who lacks taste but tries to escape censure: *Everyone has his own taste*. That amounts to saying that the basis determining a judgment of taste is merely subjective (gratification or pain), and that such judgments have no right to other people's necessary assent.

The second commonplace about taste, which is used even by those who grant judgments of taste the right to speak validly for everyone, is this: *There is no disputing about taste*. That amounts to saying that, even though the basis determining a judgment of taste may be objective, that basis still cannot be brought to determinate concepts; and hence even proofs do not allow us to *decide* anything about such a judgment, although we can certainly *quarrel* about it, and rightly so. For though *disputing* and *quarreling* are alike in that [we] try to produce agreement between judgments by means of the mutual resistance between them, disputing is different inasmuch as here we hope to produce this agreement according to determinate concepts, by basing a proof on them, so that we assume that the judgment is based on *objective concepts*; and in cases where we think that this cannot be done, we judge that disputing also is impossible.

It is easy to see that between these two commonplaces a proposition is missing. This proposition is not in common use as a proverb, but everyone still has it in mind. It is this: *One can quarrel about taste* (though one cannot dispute about it). This proposition, however, implies

the opposite of the first proposition above [Everyone has his own taste]. For if it is granted that we can quarrel about something, then there must be some hope for us to arrive at agreement about it, and so we must be able to count on the judgment's having bases that do not have merely private validity and hence are not merely subjective. But the above principle, *Everyone has his own taste*, says the direct opposite.

Hence the following antinomy emerges concerning the principle of taste:

(1) *Thesis:* A judgment of taste is not based on concepts; for otherwise one could dispute about it (decide by means of proofs).

(2) *Antithesis:* A judgment of taste is based on concepts; for otherwise, regardless of the variation among [such judgments], one could not even so much as quarrel about them (lay claim to
339 other people's necessary assent to one's judgment).

§ 57 Solution of the antinomy of taste

There is only one way for us to eliminate the conflict between the mentioned principles,[33] on which we base all our judgments of taste (and which are nothing but the two peculiarities of a judgment of taste[34] that were set out in the analytic): We must show that the concept to which we refer the object in such judgments is understood in different senses in those two maxims [or principles] of the aesthetic power of judgment, and show that it is necessary for our transcendental power of judgment to adopt both these senses (or points of view in judging) but that even the illusion arising from our confusion of the two is natural and hence unavoidable.

A judgment of taste must refer to some concept or other, for otherwise it could not possibly lay claim to necessary validity for everyone. And yet it must not be provable *from* a concept, because, while some concepts can be determined, others cannot, but are intrinsically both indeterminate and indeterminable. Concepts of the understanding are of the first kind: for them there can be a corresponding sensible intuition whose predicates determine them. On the other hand, reason has a concept of the second kind: the transcendental concept of the supersensible underlying all that intuition, so that we cannot determine this concept any further theoretically.

Now, on the other hand, a judgment of taste does deal with objects of sense – though not so as to determine a *concept* of these objects for the understanding, since it is not a cognitive judgment. Rather, this judgment is a singular intuitive presentation referred to the feeling of pleasure, and hence is only a private judgment; and to this extent its validity would be restricted to the judging individual: The object is an object of liking *for me*;[35] the same may not apply to others: Everyone has his own taste.

And yet there can be no doubt that in a judgment of taste the presentation of the object (and at the same time of the subject as well) is referred more broadly [i.e., beyond ourselves], and this broader reference is our basis for extending such judgments [and treating them] as necessary for everyone. Hence this extension must be based on some concept or other; but this concept must
340 be one that no intuition can determine, that does not permit us to cognize anything and hence does not permit us *to prove* a judgment of taste; such a mere concept is reason's pure concept of the supersensible[36] underlying the object (as well as underlying the judging subject) as an object of sense and hence as appearance. For unless we assumed that a judgment of taste relies on some concept or other, we could not save its claim to universal validity. Alternatively, if a judgment of taste were based on a concept of the understanding, such as that of perfection, even though merely a confused concept of perfection, to which we could add the sensible intuition of the beautiful as corresponding to it, then it would be possible at least intrinsically to base a judgment of taste on proofs; but that contradicts the thesis.

However, all contradiction disappears if I say this: A judgment of taste is based on a concept (the concept of a general basis of nature's subjective purposiveness for our power of judgment), but this concept does not allow us to cognize and prove anything concerning the object because it is intrinsically indeterminable and inadequate for cognition; and yet this same concept does make the judgment of taste valid for everyone, because (though each person's judgment is singular and directly accompanies his intuition) the basis that determines the judgment lies, perhaps, in the concept of what may be considered the supersensible substrate of humanity.

What is needed to solve an antinomy is only the possibility that two seemingly [*dem Scheine nach*] conflicting propositions are in fact not contradictory but are consistent, even though it would surpass our cognitive power to explain how the concept involved [i.e., how what the concept stands for] is possible. Showing this [consistency] will also allow us to grasp [the fact] that and [the reason] why this illusion [*Schein*] is natural and unavoidable for human reason, and why this illusion remains so even though it ceases to deceive us once we have resolved the seeming contradiction.

For what gives rise to this antinomy is [the fact] that we treat the concept presupposed by the universal validity of a judgment as if that concept had the same meaning in the two conflicting judgments, and yet two opposed predicates are asserted of it. Hence the thesis should instead read: A judgment of taste is not based on *determinate* concepts; but the antithesis should read: A judgment of taste is indeed based on a concept, but on an *indeterminate* one (namely, that of the supersensible substrate of appearances); and then there would be no conflict between the two. 341

Eliminating this conflict between the claims and counterclaims of taste is the best we can do. It is absolutely impossible to provide a determinate, objective principle of taste that would allow us to guide, to test, and to prove its judgments, because then they would not be judgments of taste.[37] As for the subjective principle – i.e., the indeterminate idea of the supersensible in us – as the sole key for solving the mystery of this ability [i.e., taste] concealed from us even as to its sources, we can do no more than point to it; but there is nothing we can do that would allow us to grasp it any further.

The antinomy I have set forth and settled here is based on the concept of taste in the proper sense, i.e., as an aesthetic power of judgment that merely reflects; and I reconciled the two seemingly conflicting principles [by showing] that *they may both be true*, and that is all we need. If, on the other hand, we assumed, as some do, that the basis determining taste is *agreeableness* (because the presentation underlying a judgment of taste is singular), or, as others would have it, that it is the principle of *perfection* (because the judgment is universally valid), with the definition of taste formulated accordingly, then the result would be an antinomy that we could not possibly settle except by showing that the two opposed (but opposed [as contraries,] not as mere contradictories) *propositions are both false*;[38] and that would prove the concept underlying both of them to be self-contradictory. So we see that the elimination of the antinomy of aesthetic judgment proceeds along lines similar to the solution of the antinomies of pure theoretical reason in the *Critique* [*of Pure Reason*],[39] and we see here too – as well as in the *Critique of Practical Reason*[40]– that the antinomies compel us against our will to look beyond the sensible to the supersensible as the point [where] all our a priori powers are reconciled, since that is the only alternative left to us for bringing reason into harmony with itself.

Comment I

Since we so frequently find occasion in transcendental philosophy to distinguish ideas from concepts of the understanding, it may be useful to introduce technical terms to mark the difference. I think 342 there will be no objection if I propose a few. Ideas, in the broadest sense, are presentations

referred to an object according to a certain principle (subjective or objective) but are such that they can still never become cognition of an object. There are two kinds of ideas. One of these is referred to an intuition, according to a merely subjective principle of the mutual harmony of the cognitive powers (imagination and understanding); and these ideas are called *aesthetic*. The other kind is referred to a concept, according to an objective principle, but these ideas still can never yield cognition of the object; they are called *rational* ideas.[41] Rational ideas are *transcendent* concepts; they differ from concepts of the understanding, which are called *immanent* because they can always be supplied with an experience that adequately corresponds to them.

An *aesthetic idea* cannot become cognition because it is an *intuition* (of the imagination) for which an adequate concept can never be found. A *rational idea* can never become cognition because it contains a *concept* (of the supersensible) for which no adequate intuition can ever be given.

I think we may call aesthetic ideas *unexpoundable* presentations of the imagination, and rational ideas *indemonstrable* concepts of reason. [But in saying this] I am presupposing that certainly neither of them lacks a basis, but that (as I said above in explicating ideas generally) they are produced according to certain principles of the cognitive powers to which they belong (aesthetic ideas according to subjective principles, rational ideas according to objective ones).

Concepts of the understanding must, as such, always be demonstrable (if by demonstrating we mean merely *exhibiting*, as we do in anatomy [for example[42]]); i.e., it must always be possible for the object corresponding to such concepts to be given in intuition (pure or empirical), because only in this way can they become cognitions. The concept of *magnitude* can be given in the a priori intuition of space, such as that of a straight line, and so on; the concept of *cause* can be given in [an intuition of] impenetrability, or [of] the impact of bodies, etc. Hence both these concepts can be supported by an empirical intuition, i.e., the thought of them can be illustrated (demonstrated, displayed) in an example; and this possibility must [always] be there, since otherwise we cannot
343 be certain that the thought is not empty, i.e., devoid of any object.[43]

In logic the terms demonstrable and indemonstrable are usually applied only to *propositions*. But it would be better if there we talked instead about propositions that are only indirectly certain and propositions that are *directly certain*. For pure philosophy also has propositions of both kinds, if we understand by them true propositions that can be proved, or that cannot.[44] For, as philosophy, it can indeed prove [propositions] from a priori grounds, but cannot demonstrate them, unless we totally abandon the meaning of the word demonstrate (*ostendere, exhibere*), which means the same as to exhibit one's concept [not only discursively but] in intuition as well (whether in proving or merely in defining something). If this intuition is a priori, [the exhibition[45]] is called the construction of the concept;[46] but even if the intuition is empirical, [the exhibition] is still a display of the object, which serves to assure us that the concept has objective reality. For example, if an anatomist has set forth the concept of the human eye discursively and goes on to dissect the eye to make the concept intuitable, we say that he demonstrates this organ.

Accordingly, the rational concept of the supersensible substrate of all appearances generally, or the rational concept of the supersensible that must be regarded as underlying our power of choice in relation to moral laws, i.e., the rational concept of transcendental freedom, is an indemonstrable concept and a rational idea, simply because of the type of concept it is; virtue too is such a concept, but [only] in degree. For in the case of the concept of the supersensible, there is not even an intrinsic possibility for anything corresponding to it in quality to be given in experience, whereas in the case of virtue no empirical product of our causality of freedom reaches the degree that the rational idea of virtue prescribes to us as the rule.

Just as in the case of a rational idea the *imagination* with its intuitions does not reach the given concept, so in the case of an aesthetic idea the *understanding* with its concepts never reaches the entire inner intuition that the imagination has and connects with a given presentation. And since

bringing a presentation of the imagination to concepts is the same as *expounding* it, aesthetic ideas may be called *unexpoundable* presentations of the imagination (in its free play). Later on I shall have occasion to make some further points about aesthetic ideas.[47] Here I shall merely point out that both kinds of ideas, rational as well as aesthetic, must have their principles, and both must have them in reason: the principles of rational ideas must be objective principles of reason's 344
employment, those of aesthetic ideas subjective ones.

Hence GENIUS can also be explicated as the ability to [exhibit] *aesthetic ideas*.[48] This [explication] indicates at the same time why it is that, in products of genius, art (i.e., production of the beautiful) receives its rule from nature (the nature of the subject) rather than from a deliberate purpose. For we must judge the beautiful not according to concepts, but according to the purposive attunement of the imagination that brings it into harmony with the power of concepts as such. Hence the subjective standard for that aesthetic but unconditioned purposiveness in fine art that is to lay rightful claim to everyone's necessary liking cannot be supplied by any rule or precept, but can be supplied only by that which is merely nature in the subject but which cannot be encompassed by rules or concepts – namely, the supersensible substrate (unattainable by any concept of the understanding) of all his powers; and hence the mentioned standard can be supplied only by [means of] that by reference to which we are to make all our cognitive powers harmonize, [doing] which is the ultimate purpose given us by the intelligible [element] of our nature. It is in this way alone, too, that this purposiveness, for which we cannot prescribe an objective principle, can be based a priori on a principle that is subjective and yet universally valid.

Comment II

Here the following important point arises spontaneously: that there are *three kinds of antinomy* of pure reason, all of which are still alike inasmuch as they force reason to abandon the otherwise very natural presupposition that objects of sense are things in themselves and force reason to regard them instead as mere appearances that are based on an intelligible substrate (something supersensible, the concept of which is only an idea and precludes cognition proper). If there were no such antinomy, reason could never bring itself to accept such a principle that so greatly narrows the area in which it can speculate and could never bring itself to make sacrifices that have to involve the complete destruction of so many hopes that were so brilliant otherwise. For though reason's prospect of proportionately greater employment in a practical respect has come to compensate it for the mentioned loss, still it seems that reason cannot help being pained as it 345
tries to part with those hopes and to sever its old attachment.

That there are three kinds of antinomy is due to this: There are three cognitive powers – viz., understanding, judgment, and reason. Each of these (as a higher cognitive power) must have its a priori principles. Hence, insofar as reason passes judgment on these principles themselves and their use, it unrelentingly demands, for all of them, the unconditioned for the given conditioned. And yet we can never find this unconditioned if we regard the sensible as belonging to things in themselves, instead of regarding the sensible as mere appearance, based on something supersensible (the intelligible substrate of nature outside and within us) taken as thing in itself. And so three antinomies arise: (1) *for the cognitive power*, an antinomy of reason concerning the theoretical use of the understanding when this use is extended up to the unconditioned; (2) *for the feeling of pleasure and displeasure*, an antinomy of reason concerning the aesthetic use of judgment; (3) *for the power of desire*, an antinomy [of reason] concerning the practical use of our intrinsically legislative reason. These antinomies arise insofar as all these powers must have their higher a priori principles and, in conformity with an inescapable demand of reason, must be able both to judge and to determine their object under these principles *unconditionally* as well.

Now regarding two of the antinomies of those higher cognitive powers, viz., the antinomies concerning their theoretical and practical use, we have already shown elsewhere[49] that they are *inevitable* if in our theoretical and practical judgments we do not rely on [the assumption of] a supersensible substrate for the given objects [and take the latter] as appearances, but have shown there also that these antinomies *can be solved* once we do so. As for the antinomy in our use of the power of judgment in conformity with reason's demand and as for the solution given for that antinomy here, there is no way it can be avoided unless we adopt one of the following two alternatives. *One* of these is to deny that an aesthetic judgment of taste is based on any a priori principle whatever, so that [we would hold that] all claim to necessary universal assent is a baseless, vain delusion and [hold that] a judgment of taste deserves to be considered correct only insofar as there *happen* to be many people agreeing on it; actually even this [we would hold] not because we *suspect* that there is an a priori principle behind this harmony, but because (as with the taste of
346 the palate) there is a contingent uniformity in the organization of [different] subjects. The *other* alternative is to assume that a judgment of taste is actually a disguised rational judgment about the perfection we have discovered in a thing and [in[50]] the reference of its manifold to a purpose, so that basically the judgment is teleological, and we call it aesthetic only because of the confusion that here attaches to our reflection. On this alternative we could declare it unnecessary and idle to solve the antinomy by means of transcendental ideas, and so we could reconcile those laws of taste with objects of sense even if these were things in themselves rather than mere appearances. However, we have shown in several places[51] in the exposition of judgments of taste that neither of these attempts to escape the antinomy will work at all.

On the other hand, if it be granted that our deduction is at least on the right track, even if not yet sufficiently clarified in all details, then we are led to three ideas: *first*, the idea of the supersensible in general, not further determined, as the substrate of nature; *second*, the idea of the same[52] supersensible as the principle of nature's subjective purposiveness for our cognitive power; *third*, the idea of the same supersensible as the principle of the purposes of freedom and of the harmony of these purposes with nature in the moral sphere.

§ 58 On the idealism concerning the purposiveness of both nature and art as the sole principle of aesthetic judgment

Note, first of all, that the principle of taste can be interpreted in two basically different ways. We can say that taste always judges by determining bases that are empirical and hence can be given only a posteriori through our senses, or we can grant that taste judges on a basis that is a priori. The former critique of taste would be an *empiricist* one; the latter would be *rationalistic*. On the empiricist[53] critique of taste the object of our liking would not be distinct from the *agreeable*; on the rationalistic one, if the judgment rested on determinate concepts, the object of our liking would not be distinct from the *good*; and so [in either case] all the *beauty* we find in the world would be denied, and we would have nothing left in its place except a special term, which might perhaps refer to a
347 certain blend of those two kinds of liking. But we have already shown that liking can have [not only empirical but] also a priori bases, which are therefore consistent with the adoption of rationalism as one's principle, even though such bases cannot be encompassed by *determinate concepts*.

If we adopt the rationalistic interpretation of the principle of taste, we may then interpret purposiveness either *realistically* or *idealistically*. But we have seen that a judgment of taste is not a cognitive judgment and that beauty is not a characteristic of the object when taken in its own right. Hence the rationalistic interpretation of the principle of taste can never be [the view] that in this judgment we think of the purposiveness as objective, i.e., [the view] that the judgment is theoretical and hence is also a logical judgment (even with [the qualification that] our judging is

confused) regarding the perfection of the object, but [can] only [be the view] that the judgment is an *aesthetic* one regarding the harmony, within the subject, of the imagination's presentation of the object with the essential principles of judgment as such. Hence even if we adopt rationalism as our principle, there is only one way we can construe a judgment of taste and the difference between a realistic and an idealistic interpretation of it: on the realistic interpretation we assume that this subjective purposiveness is an actual (intentional) *purpose* that nature (or art) pursues, namely, harmony with our power of judgment; on the idealistic interpretation we assume only that the subjective purposiveness is a purposive harmony – manifesting itself on its own, contingently and without a purpose – with the needs of our power of judgment in dealing with nature and those of its forms that are produced according to [its] particular laws.

The realistic interpretation of the aesthetic purposiveness of nature finds much support in the beautiful formations in the realm of organized nature, for it certainly seems as if anything beautiful must have been produced on the basis of an idea of it in the producing cause, namely, a *purpose* that this cause pursued for the benefit of our imagination. Consider flowers, blossoms, even the shapes of entire plants, or consider the grace we see in the structure of various types of animals, which is unnecessary for their own use but is selected, as it were, for our taste. Consider above all the variety and harmonious combination of colors, so likable and charming to our eyes (as in pheasants, crustaceans, insects, down to the commonest flowers): since these colors have to do merely with the surface, and even there have nothing to do with the figure [i.e., (visible) structure] of these creatures – which might be needed for these creatures' inner purposes after all – it seems that their sole purpose is to be beheld from the outside. All of 348
this lends weighty support to the kind of explanation that relies on the assumption that nature pursues actual purposes directed to our aesthetic power of judgment.

And yet this assumption cannot be upheld. Reason resists it with its maxims to avoid, wherever possible, unnecessary multiplication of principles. Above all, however, nature shows in all of its free formations a great mechanical tendency to produce forms that seem made, as it were, for the aesthetic employment of our power of judgment; and nature gives us no grounds whatever for supposing that [the production of such forms] requires anything more than nature's mechanism – considered as nothing but nature[54] – since nature's mechanism can make these forms purposive for our judging of them even if they are not based on any idea. In speaking of *free formations* of nature, I mean *those* where, in a *fluid at rest*, one part (sometimes merely caloric[55]) evaporates or separates from the fluid, and this separation makes the remainder solidify and take on a definite shape or fabric (figure or texture) that varies in accordance with what difference in kind there is in the matter, but is exactly the same whenever the matter is the same. This process does presuppose, however, that we are dealing with what we call a true fluid, in other words, a fluid in which the matter is completely dissolved, and not with one that would have to be considered a mere mixture of a fluid and solid particles merely suspended in it.

Under the described circumstances, formation then takes place, not by a gradual transition from the fluid to the solid state, but as it were by a leap: a sudden solidification called *shooting*; this transition is also called *crystallization*. The commonest example of this type of formation occurs when water freezes: At first straight slivers of ice form in it; these join together at angles of sixty degrees, while others similarly attach themselves to them at every point until all the water has turned to ice. So during this time the water between the slivers of ice does not become more viscous gradually but is as perfectly fluid as it would be at a much higher temperature, and yet it is quite as cold as ice. The matter that separates, and at the moment of solidification suddenly escapes, is a considerable quantity of caloric; since it was required merely to preserve fluidity, its departure does not leave the present ice any colder than was the fluid water from which the ice just formed.

Many salts and rocks have a crystalline figure and are produced in the same way by some
349 kind of earth that has been dissolved in water through some unknown mediation. The drusy configurations of many minerals, such as cubical galena, red silver ore, and so on, very probably form in the same way, i.e., also in water and by the shooting of their particles, some cause forcing these particles to leave that vehicle and to combine into definite external shapes.

But the same applies to the inside as well; any matter that was fluid merely as a result of being heated, and that solidifies as it cools, will show a definite texture when it is broken. This permits the judgment that, if the matter's own weight or its contact with air had not prevented it, then the shape peculiar to its kind would have shown on the outside as well. This has been observed in some metals that, after having been molten, had hardened on the outside but were still fluid on the inside: when the inner still fluid portion was drained off, the remaining inner portion would now quietly crystallize. Many such mineral crystallizations, e.g., spars, hematite, and aragonite, often result in exceedingly beautiful shapes, such shapes as art might invent; and the halo in the grotto of Antiparos[56] is merely the product of water seeping through layers of gypsum.

It certainly seems that generally fluids are more ancient than solids, and that both plants and animal bodies are made from fluid nutritive matter, insofar as it takes form undisturbed. It is true that in the case of nutritive matter this formation occurs above all in accordance with a certain original predisposition which is directed to purposes (and which, as I shall show in Part II, we must judge not aesthetically but teleologically, with realism as the principle). But, in view of the universal law of the affinity of all types of matter, perhaps this formation occurs, in addition, freely and by crystallizing. We could compare this, e.g., with an atmosphere, a mixture of different types of air; when the watery fluids that are dissolved in it separate from it because the heat [the caloric] is leaving, they produce snow-figures that, depending on what the particular mixture of air is at the time, often have a shape that seems very artistic and is exceedingly beautiful. Now it is quite conceivable, and involves no infringement on the teleological principle by which we judge organization, that the beauty in both the shape and the color of flowers, plumage, and sea-shells can similarly be attributed to nature and its ability to structure itself with aesthetic purposiveness as well – freely, without following specific
350 purposes but merely in accordance with chemical laws, by depositing the matter needed for this organization.

But there is one fact that virtually proves the principle that the purposiveness in the beautiful in nature is *ideal*, that we ourselves lay this principle at the basis of all our aesthetic judgments, and that it does not permit us to explain [natural beauty] on the basis of a real purpose pursued by nature for our presentational power – namely, the fact that whenever we judge any beauty at all we seek the standard for it a priori in ourselves, and that the aesthetic power of judgment itself legislates concerning the judgment as to whether something is beautiful or not. This could not be so if we adopted a realistic interpretation of the purposiveness of nature, because then we would have to learn from nature what to consider beautiful, and a judgment of taste would be subject to empirical principles. In fact, however, what counts in judging beauty is not what nature is, nor even what purpose it [has] for us, but how we receive it. If nature had created its forms for our liking, such a purposiveness of nature would always be objective; it would not be a subjective purposiveness, based on the play of the imagination in its freedom, where it is we who receive nature with favor, not nature that favors us. This property of nature – that when we judge certain of its products nature allows us to perceive in the relation of our mental powers an inner purposiveness, and one that is to be declared necessary and universally valid on the basis of something supersensible – cannot be a natural purpose, or, rather, we cannot judge it to be that. For if our judgment were determined by such a purpose, it would be based on heteronomy; it would not be free and based on autonomy, as a judgment of taste should be.

This principle of the idealism concerning purposiveness can be recognized even more distinctly in fine art. That the purposiveness in fine art cannot be interpreted by assuming an aesthetic realism, with the purposiveness [working] through sensations, (since then the art would be not fine but merely agreeable art) – this much fine art shares with beautiful nature. But in fine art it is obvious furthermore that even a rationalistic interpretation of the principle of purposiveness must presuppose that the purposes are ideal rather than real. For the liking that arises from aesthetic ideas must not depend on our achieving determinate purposes (since then the art would be mechanical as well as intentional); and yet fine art, as such, must be regarded as a product of genius rather than of 351
understanding and science, and hence as getting its rule through *aesthetic* ideas, which are essentially distinct from rational ideas of determinate purposes.

Just as we must assume that objects of sense as appearances are *ideal* if we are to explain how we can determine their forms a priori, so we must presuppose an *idealistic* interpretation of purposiveness in judging the beautiful in nature and in art if the critique [of taste] is to explain how there can be judgments of taste that claim a priori validity for everyone (yet without basing on concepts the purposiveness presented in the object).

§ 59 On beauty as the symbol of morality

Establishing that our concepts have reality always requires intuitions. If the concepts are empirical, the intuitions are called *examples*.[57] If they are pure concepts of the understanding, the intuitions are called *schemata*.[58] But if anyone goes as far as to demand that we establish the objective reality of the rational concepts (i.e., the ideas) for the sake of their theoretical cognition, then he asks for something impossible, because absolutely no intuition can be given that would be adequate to them.[59]

All *hypotyposis* (exhibition, *subiectio ad adspectum*[60]) consists in making [a concept] sensible, and is either *schematic* or *symbolic*.[61] In schematic hypotyposis there is a concept that the understanding has formed, and the intuition corresponding to it is given a priori. In symbolic hypotyposis there is a concept which only reason can think and to which no sensible intuition can be adequate, and this concept is supplied with an intuition that judgment treats in a way merely analogous to the procedure it follows in schematizing; i.e., the treatment agrees with this procedure merely in the rule followed rather than in terms of the intuition itself, and hence merely in terms of the form of the reflection rather than its content.

The more recent logicians have come to use the word *symbolic* in another sense that is wrong and runs counter to the meaning of the word. They use it to contrast symbolic with *intuitive* presentation, whereas in fact symbolic presentation is only a kind of intuitive presentation. For the latter (the intuitive) can be divided into *schematic* and *symbolic* presentation: both are 352
hypotyposes, i.e., exhibitions (*exhibitiones*), not mere *characterizations*, i.e., designations of concepts by accompanying sensible signs. Such signs contain nothing whatever that belongs to the intuition of the object; their point is the subjective one of serving as a means for reproducing concepts in accordance with the imagination's law of association. They are either words, or visible (algebraic or even mimetic) signs, and they merely *express* concepts.[62]

Hence all intuitions supplied for a priori concepts are either *schemata*[63] or *symbols*. Schemata contain direct, symbols indirect, exhibitions of the concept. Schematic exhibition is demonstrative. Symbolic exhibition uses an analogy (for which we use empirical intuitions as well), in which judgment performs a double function: it applies the concept to the object of a sensible intuition; and then it applies the mere rule by which it reflects on that intuition to an entirely different object, of which the former object is only the symbol. Thus a monarchy ruled according to its own constitutional laws would be presented as an animate body, but a monarchy ruled by an

individual absolute will would be presented as a mere machine (such as a hand mill); but in either case the presentation is only *symbolic*. For though there is no similarity between a despotic state and a hand mill, there certainly is one between the rules by which we reflect on the two and on how they operate [*Kausalität*]. This function [of judgment] has not been analyzed much so far, even though it very much deserves fuller investigation; but this is not the place to pursue it. Our language is replete with such indirect exhibitions according to an analogy, where the expression does not contain the actual schema for the concept but contains merely a symbol for our reflection. Thus the words *foundation* (support, basis), to *depend* (to be held from above), to *flow* (instead of to follow) from something, *substance* (the support of accidents, as *Locke* puts it[64]), and countless others are not schematic but symbolic hypotyposes; they express concepts not by means of a direct intuition but only according to an analogy with one, i.e., a transfer of
353 our reflection on an object of intuition to an entirely different concept, to which perhaps no intuition can ever directly correspond. If a mere way of presenting [something] may ever be called cognition (which I think is permissible if this cognition is a principle not for determining the object theoretically, as to what it is in itself, but for determining it practically, as to what the idea of the object ought to become for us and for our purposive employment of it), then all our cognition of God is merely symbolic.[65] Whoever regards it as schematic – while including in it the properties of understanding, will, etc., whose objective reality is proved only in worldly beings – falls into anthropomorphism,[66] just as anyone who omits everything intuitive falls into deism, which allows us to cognize nothing whatsoever, not even from a practical point of view.[67]

Now I maintain that the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good; and only because we refer [*Rücksicht*] the beautiful to the morally good (we all do so [*Beziehung*] naturally and require all others also to do so, as a duty) does our liking for it include a claim to everyone else's assent,[68] while the mind is also conscious of being ennobled, by this [reference], above a mere receptivity for pleasure derived from sense impressions, and it assesses the value of other people too on the basis of [their having] a similar maxim in their power of judgment. The morally good is the *intelligible* that taste has in view, as I indicated in the preceding section;[69] for it is with this intelligible that even our higher cognitive powers harmonize, and without this intelligible contradictions would continually arise from the contrast between the nature of these powers and the claims that taste makes. In this ability [taste], judgment does not find itself subjected to a heteronomy from empirical laws, as it does elsewhere in empirical judging – concerning objects of such a pure liking it legislates to itself, just as reason does regarding the power of desire. And because the subject has this possibility within him, while outside [him] there is also the possibility that nature will harmonize with it, judgment finds itself referred to something that is both in the subject himself and outside him, something that is neither nature nor freedom and yet is linked with the basis of freedom, the supersensible, in which the theoretical and the practical power are in an unknown manner combined and joined into a unity. I shall now bring up a few points of this analogy [between the beautiful and the morally good], noting at the same time what difference there is between them.

(1) The beautiful we like *directly* (but only in intuition reflect[ed upon], not in its concept, as
354 we do morality), (2) We like it *without any interest*. (Our liking for the morally good is connected necessarily with an interest, but with an interest that does not precede our judgment about the liking but is produced by this judgment in the first place.) (3) In judging the beautiful, we present the *freedom* of the imagination (and hence [of] our power[70] [of] sensibility) as harmonizing with the lawfulness of the understanding. (In a moral judgment we think the freedom of the will as the will's harmony with itself according to universal laws of reason.) (4) We present the subjective principle for judging the beautiful as *universal*, i.e., as valid for everyone, but as unknowable through any universal concept. (The objective principle of morality we also declare to be universal[ly valid], i.e., [valid] for all subjects, as well as for all acts of the same subject, but

also declare to be knowable through a universal concept.) Hence not only is a moral judgment capable of [having] determinate constitutive principles, but its possibility *depends* on our basing the[se] maxims on those principles and their universality.

The common understanding also habitually bears this analogy in mind, and beautiful objects of nature or of art are often called by names that seem to presuppose that we are judging [these objects] morally. We call buildings or trees majestic and magnificent, or landscapes cheerful and gay; even colors are called innocent, humble, or tender, because they arouse sensations in us that are somehow analogous to the consciousness we have in a mental state produced by moral judgments. Taste enables us, as it were, to make the transition from sensible charm to a habitual moral interest without making too violent a leap; for taste presents the imagination as admitting, even in its freedom, of determination that is purposive for the understanding, and it teaches us to like even objects of sense freely, even apart from sensible charm.

Translated by Werner S. Pluhar

Notes

1 [The synthetic method proceeds from principles to their consequences, the analytic method the other way. Cf. the *Logic*, Ak. IX, 149, and the *Prolegomena*, Ak. IV, 263, 275, 276n, 279, and 365.] [*Editor*: notes in square brackets are by the translator.]

2 [Cf. *Critique of Judgment*, Ak. 232 br. n. 51.] [*Editor*: 'Ak' refers to the pagination of the original Akadamie edition of Kant's works. Unless otherwise stated, the Ak. numbers here refer to the pagination of the *Critique of Judgment*, included in the margin of the translation.]

3 [Charles Batteux (1713–80), French philosopher and, in particular, aesthetician, and author of several works; Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81), German dramatist and aesthetician.]

4 [*Essays, Moral and Political* (1741–42), Essay VIII, 'The Sceptic':

> There is something approaching to principles in mental taste, and critics can reason and dispute more plausibly than cooks or perfumers. We may observe, however, that this uniformity among human kind hinders not, but that there is a considerable diversity in the sentiments of beauty and worth, and that education, custom, prejudice, caprice, and humour frequently vary our taste of this kind. You will never convince a man who is not accustomed to Italian music and has not an ear to follow its intricacies that a Scots tune is not preferable. You have not even any single argument beyond your own taste which you can employ in your behalf; and to your antagonist his particular taste will always appear a more convincing argument to the contrary. If you be wise, each of you will allow that the other may be in the right, and, having many other instances of this diversity of taste, you will both confess that beauty and worth are merely of a relative nature and consist in an agreeable sentiment, produced by an object in a particular mind, according to the peculiar structure and constitution of that mind.]

5 [I.e., creating a schema; cf. Ak. 253 br. n. 17. Kant is about to say that in a judgment of taste the imagination as such is subsumed under the *understanding* as such. Strictly speaking, however, the imagination is subsumed under the (indeterminate) *schema* of the understanding as such; and this indeterminate schema is the 'condition' which Kant has just mentioned.]

6 [In the sense of *feeling*, in this case.]

7

> [As far as *empirical judgments have universal validity* they are JUDGMENTS OF EXPERIENCE; but those *that are valid only subjectively* I call mere JUDGMENTS OF PERCEPTION. The latter require no pure concept of the understanding, but only the logical connection of the perceptions in a thinking subject. Judgments of experience, on the

other hand, require, in addition to the presentations of sensible intuition, special *concepts produced originally in the understanding*, and it is these concepts that make the judgment of experience *valid objectively*.

Prolegomena, Ak. IV, 298. Cf. the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 120, A 374, B 422n.]

8 [The *metaphysical* deduction (for this name, see B 159), A 65–83 = B 90–116, is to show what categories there are (in the understanding); the *transcendental* deduction, A 84–130 and B 116–69, is to prove that these categories are objectively valid.]

9 [Cf. the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 137–47 = B 176–87, and below, Ak. 351–52.]

10 [Cf. the *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 19. 'A priori' has here been construed adverbially, as modifying 'possible.' It can also be read as an adjective modifying 'judgments,' so that Kant's question reads, 'How are synthetic a priori judgments possible?' Either reading can be supported by quotes in which the ambiguity does not arise, since Kant switches frequently between these two ways of talking. See, e.g., the passage immediately following the question Kant just quoted, B 20.]

11 [On the problem as to where the deduction *ends* (specifically, the problem as to whether the link of beauty to *morality* is still part of the deduction), see the Translator's Introduction [in the Pluhar translation of the *Critique of Judgment*], lxi–lxvi.]

12 To be justified in laying claim to universal assent to a judgment of the aesthetic power of judgment, which rests merely on subjective bases, one need grant only the following: (1) that in all people the subjective conditions of this power are the same as concerns the relation required for cognition as such between the cognitive powers that are activated in the power of judgment; and this must be true, for otherwise people could not communicate their presentations to one another, indeed they could not even communicate cognition; (2) that the judgment has taken into consideration merely this relation (and hence the *formal condition* of the power of judgment) and is pure, i.e., mingled neither with concepts of the object nor with sensations as the judgment's determining bases. But even if a mistake be made on the latter point,[13] this amounts to nothing but an incorrect application, in a particular case, of an authority given to us by a law, and in no way annuls the authority [itself].

13 [Cf. Ak. 216 incl. br. n. 30, as well as the Comment Kant is about to make, but esp. § 39, Ak. 293, and § 40, Ak. 293–94.]

14 [Cf. just above, n. 15 and br. n. 16.]

15 [Or 'beautiful' science: Kant is responding, above all, to Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and Georg Friedrich Meier. Cf. the Translator's Introduction [in the Pluhar translation of the *Critique of Judgment*], l–li.]

16 [Cf. the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 280.]

17 [*Sinnesempfindung*; see § 39, Ak. 291 incl. br. n. 19.]

18 [Cf. the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 225.]

19 [*Geistreich*: 'rich in spirit,' literally.]

20 [Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813), German poet and man of letters.]

21 [Karl Vorländer, editor of the *Critique of Judgment* in the *Philosophische Bibliothek* edition, notes (v. 39a, 163, n. b) that Kant's manuscript read '*Nachahmung … Nachahmung*' ('[not to be] imitated [but to be] imitated'), which was then 'corrected' to the reading found here, but that Kant presumably meant to write '*Nachahmung … Nachfolge*' ('[not to be] imitated [but to be] followed'), in line with what he says elsewhere: see esp. Ak. 318 and 283.]

22 [Cf. Ak. 232 n. 49.]

23 [Cf. Aristotle, the *Poetics*, ch. iv, 1448b, and Edmund Burke, *Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Pt. I, Section xvi.]

24 [Cf. the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 225 and 246. Cf. also above, § 46, Ak. 308.]

25 [Cf. § 57, Comment I, Ak. 341–44.]

26 [On the 'productive' imagination, see Ak. 240 br. n. 66; and cf. Ak. 243 br. n. 73, where Kant tells us in what sense the imagination *is not* creative.]

27 [Kant is giving a German translation (probably his own) of the following lines written in French by Frederick the Great (*Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, 1846 ff., x, 203):
Oui, finissons sans trouble, et mourons sans regrets,
En laissant l'Univers comblé de nos bienfaits.
Ainsi l'Astre du jour, au bout de sa carrière,
Répand sur l'horizon une douce lumière,
Et les derniers rayons qu'il darde dans les airs
Sont ses derniers soupirs qu'il donne à l'Univers.]

28 [From *Akademische Gedichte* (*Academic Poems*) (1782), vol. i, p. 70, by J. Ph. L. Withof (1725–89), professor of morals, oratory, and medicine at Duisburg, Germany. The original poem had 'goodness' instead of 'virtue.']

29 Perhaps nothing more sublime has ever been said, or a thought ever been expressed more sublimely, than in that inscription above the temple of *Isis* (Mother Nature): 'I am all that is, that was, and that will be, and no mortal has lifted my veil.' *Segner*[30] made use of this idea in an ingenious vignette prefixed to his *Naturlehre* [*Natural Science*], so as first to imbue the pupil, whom he was about to lead into this temple, with the sacred thrill that is meant to attune the mind to solemn attentiveness.

30 [Johann Andreas von Segner (1704–77), German physicist and mathematician at Jena, Göttingen, and Halle. He is the author of several significant scientific works. He introduced the concept of the surface tension of liquids.]

31 [Emphasis added.]

32 [Cf. Ak. 355 br. n. 41.]

33 [The thesis and antithesis.]

34 [See § 31, Ak. 281, and § § 32–33, Ak. 281–85.]

35 [Cf. § 7, Ak. 212–13.]

36 [On Kant's mysterious *switch* from the indeterminate concept of nature's purposiveness (Ak. 180–92 and the third Moment, Ak. 219–36) to the (indeterminate) concept of the *supersensible* (specifically the supersensible as basis of that same purposiveness of nature), see 'Problem I' in the Translator's Introduction [in the Pluhar translation of the *Critique of Judgment*], lxii–lxiii and xciv–xcviii.]

37 [Cf. § 34, Ak. 285–86.]

38 [Cf. the *Logic*, Ak. IX, 71.]

39 [For these antinomies and their solution, see A 405–567 = B 432–595.]

40 [Ak. V, 107–19.]

41 [Or 'ideas of reason.' Emphasis added.]

42 [Constructing a (pure) concept is also included. Cf. Ak. 232 br. n. 51.]

43 [Cf. the *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 291–93.]

44 [Cf. the *Logic*, Ak. IX, 71 and 110.]

45 [Correcting '*welche*' to '*welcher*,' as Windelband rightly recommends: Ak. V, 529.]

46 [Cf. Ak. 232 br. n. 51, and Ak. 351 br. n. 31.]

47 [See § 58, Ak. 350–51, and § 60, Ak. 355.]

48 [Cf. § 49, Ak. 313–14.]

49 [*Critique of Pure Reason*, A 405–567 = B 432–595; *Critique of Practical Reason*, Ak. V, 107–19.]

50 [Reading '*der Beziehung*' for '*die Beziehung*,' thus connecting it with '*an*,' not with '*über*.']

51 [See § § 3–5 (Ak. 205–11), § 7 (Ak. 212–13), § 11 (Ak. 221), § § 13–15 (Ak. 223–29), § 18 (Ak. 236–37), as well as Ak. 266–67.]

52 [On the assertion that the 'three' supersensibles are the same, see the Translator's Introduction [in the Pluhar translation of the *Critique of Judgment*, lxiii–lxiv.]

53 [Emphasis removed.]

54 [I.e., without bringing in the supersensible substrate of nature and of nature's mechanism.]

55 [Before it was discovered that heat is reducible to motion, heat was explained as due to caloric (*materia caloris*), which was thought of as an unweighable elastic fluid that could penetrate, expand and dissolve bodies, or

dissipate them in vapor. In the *De igne* (*Concerning Fire*) (1755), Ak. I, 377, Kant equates caloric with aether, the 'matter [i.e., medium] of light.' Cf. also the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, Ak. IV, 530.]

56 [Small island in the Cyclades, in Greece, noted for a splendid stalactite cavern on the south coast.]

57 [Cf. *On the Progress of Metaphysics since Leibniz and Wolff* (published in the year of Kant's death, 1804), Ak. XX, 325.]

58 [See Ak. 253 br. n. 17.]

59 [See the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 310–40 = B 366–98.]

60 [Submission to inspection.]

61 [Cf. *On the Progress of Metaphysics since Leibniz and Wolff*, Ak. XX, 279–80: To provide a concept with objective reality, Kant says, i.e., to show that it is not empty but is adequate for cognition, we must exhibit the concept. He goes on: 'If we provide the concept with objective reality straightforwardly [*geradezu*] (*directe*) by means of the intuition that corresponds to it, rather than [indirectly or] mediately, this act is called schematism. But if the concept can be exhibited only [indirectly or] mediately, in its implications [*Folgen*: cf. above, Ak. 315] (*indirecte*), this act may be called the symbolization of the concept. The first we do for concepts of the sensible, the second is an expedient we use for concepts of the supersensible, which as such cannot actually be exhibited, and given in any possible experience. … The symbol of an idea (or rational concept) is a presentation of the object by analogy: i.e., we present the object of the idea [e.g., God; cf. below, Ak. 484 br. n. 107] in terms of the relation [which some other object, e.g., man, has] to its [effects or] consequences [*Folgen*] and which is the same relation that we consider the object itself as having to its consequences, and we do this even though the [two] objects themselves are quite different in kind. For example, I may in this way present certain products of nature, e.g., organized things, such as animals or plants, in relation to their cause, by presenting them like a watch in its relation to man, as its author. The relation [I use here is] identical in the two [cases]: it is causality as such, as a category; but the subject that has this relation [to its effects] remains unknown to me in its intrinsic character, and hence I cannot exhibit it, but can exhibit only that relation.' Cf. also *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis* (*On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World*), Ak. II, 396; *On* [*the*] *Dignified Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy*, Ak. VIII, the n. on 399–401; the *Prolegomena*, § § 57–59, Ak. IV, 357–62; the *Anthropology*, Ak. VII, 191; and contrast the 'schematism of analogy,' *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone*, Ak. VI, the n. on 64–65. See also the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Ak. V, 70–71.]

62 The intuitive [element] in cognition must be contrasted with the discursive [i.e., conceptual] (not the symbolic). The former is either *schematic* and proceeds by *demonstration*; or it is *symbolic*, a presentation in accordance with a mere *analogy*.

63 [Cf. Ak. 253 br. n. 17.]

64 [*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Bk. II, ch. xiii, 19.]

65 [I.e., cognition by analogy. See above, Ak. 351 br. n. 31.]

66 [Cf. Ak. 457.]

67 [Cf. the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 631–33 = B 659–61.]

68 [On the force of this link of beauty to morality, see the Translator's Introduction [in the Pluhar translation of the *Critique of Judgment*], lxi and lxv–lxvi.]

69 [See the reference to the supersensible in § 58, Ak. 350. As Windelband points out, however. (Ak. V, 529), Kant presumably meant § 57, Ak. 340–46.]

70 [Sensibility is the *lower* cognitive power (cf. the *Anthropology*, § 40, Ak. VII, 196) and as such is passive (whereas the higher cognitive powers are active). In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A 19 = B 33), Kant calls sensibility a *capacity* (*Fähigkeit*), rather than a *power* (*Vermögen*). But elsewhere in the work it becomes clear that Kant intends the two terms to be synonymous: see *ibid*., A 51 = B 75, and cf. above, Ak. 177.]

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Immanuel Kant in English

Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770, ed. and trans. D. Walford with R. Meerbote, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime (1764), trans. J.T. Goldthwait, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960.

Critique of Pure Reason (1781, 1787), trans. N. Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan, 1929.

Critique of Pure Reason (1781, 1787), trans. W.S. Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996.

Critique of Pure Reason (1781, 1787), trans. P. Guyer and A.W. Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics (1783), trans. L.W. Beck, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1950 [now Macmillan].

Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics (1783), trans. G. Hatfield, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (1785), trans. H.J. Paton, London: Hutchinson, 1948.

Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (1785), ed. and trans. M. Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Critique of Practical Reason (1788), trans. L.W. Beck, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956 [now Macmillan].

Practical Philosophy, ed. M. Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Critique of Judgement (1790), trans. J. Creed Meredith, Oxford: Clarendon, 1928.

Critique of Judgment (1790), trans. W.S. Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987.

Critique of the Power of Judgment (1790), trans. P. Guyer and E. Matthews, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

The Metaphysics of Morals (1797), ed. M. Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Further reading

For introductions to the systematic nature of Kant's aesthetics, see Kemal (1997), McCloskey (1987), and Wenzel (2005). Closer, more technical studies of the structure of his aesthetic philosophy, including the place of art, beauty, taste, aesthetic pleasure, and imagination in his theory, are given by Allison (2001), Banham (2000), Berger (2009), Crawford (1974), Guyer (1993, 1997, 2005), Kirwan (2006), Pluhar (1987), Rogerson (1986, 2008), and Schaper (1979). Anthologies providing a range of perspectives are Chadwick and Cazeaux (1992), Cohen and Guyer (1982), Guyer (1992, 2003), and Rehberg and Jones (2000). For a dictionary of Kantian concepts and themes, see Caygill (1995).

The systematic nature of Kant's critical philosophy means that the relationship between the subjects of his three *Critiques* – knowledge and experience, morality, and art and teleology – is a vital question for Kantian scholarship. The relation between aesthetics, knowledge, and cognition has been explored by Cazeaux (2003), Gasché (2003), Ginsborg (1990), Hughes (2007), Kalar (2006), Kukla (2006), and Rush (2001). The question of the relation between aesthetics and morality, and the unity of Kant's critical philosophy as a whole, is addressed by Allison (2001), Banham (2000), Bell (1987), Cazeaux (2007), Cohen (1982), Crowther (1991), Elliott (1992), Genova (1992), Gotshalk (1992), Guyer (1993, 1997, 2005), Henrich (1994), Kemal (1992), Kneller (2002), Rogerson (1992), and Wachter (2006). On purposiveness, arguably the pivotal concept in the third *Critique*, and Kant's entire critical system, see Hughes (2006, 2007), Pluhar (1987), and Zuckert (2006).

Many studies focus on individual themes within the *Critique of Judgment* or apply its content to debates within contemporary aesthetics and culture. For assessments of the importance of the third *Critique* to questions of hermeneutics, poststructuralism, and ontology, see Caygill (1989), Derrida (1987), Gasché (2003), Makkreel (1990), de Man (1984), Rehberg and Jones (2000), Ross (2007), and Shaviro (2009).

How Kant's aesthetics fares in the encounter with works of art is considered by Caygill (1997), Cohen (1982), de Duve (1998), Gaiger (1999), Kemal (1986, 1992), Savile (1993), and Winchester (2000), with Crowther (1991), Lazaroff (1980), Lyotard (1994), Makkreel (1984, 1990), and Pillow (2000) paying special attention to the sublime.

H.E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

G. Banham, *Kant and the Ends of Aesthetics*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.

D. Bell, 'The art of judgement', *Mind*, 1987, vol. 96, 221–44. Reproduced in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, pp. 13–38.

D. Berger, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory: The Beautiful and Agreeable*, London: Continuum, 2009.
H. Caygill, *The Art of Judgment*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.
———, *A Kant Dictionary*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
———, 'Stelarc and the chimera: Kant's Critique of Prosthetic Judgment', *Art Journal*, 1997, vol. 56, 46–51.
C. Cazeaux, 'Art and knowledge in Kant's aesthetics', in *Working Papers in Art and Design*, 2003. Online. Available HTTP: http://www.herts.ac.uk/artdes1/research/papers/wpades/vol2/cazeaux.html (accessed 3 April 2010).
———, *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy: From Kant to Derrida*, New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 35–55.
R. Chadwick and C. Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, London: Routledge, 1992.
T. Cohen, 'Why beauty is a symbol of morality', in Cohen and Guyer (eds), *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics*, 1982, pp. 221–36.
T. Cohen and P. Guyer (eds), *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
D.W. Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974.
P. Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime: From Morality to Art*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
J. Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. G. Bennington and I. MacLeod, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. The chapter 'Parergon' is included in this volume unabridged.
T. de Duve, *Kant after Duchamp*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998.
R.K. Elliott, 'The unity of Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgment', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, 1992, pp. 293–308.
J. Gaiger, 'Constraints and conventions: Kant and Greenberg on aesthetic judgement', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 1999, vol. 39, 376–91.
R. Gasché, *The Idea of Form: Rethinking Kant's Aesthetics*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
A.C. Genova, 'Kant's complex problem of reflective judgment', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, 1992, pp. 54–76.
H. Ginsborg, *The Role of Taste in Kant's Theory of Cognition*, New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1990.
D.W. Gotshalk, 'Form and expression in Kant's aesthetics', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, 1992, pp. 147–57.
P. Guyer (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
———, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
———, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. 2nd edition.
———, (ed.), *Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgment: Critical Essays*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.
———, *Kant's System of Nature and Freedom: Selected Essays*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.
D. Henrich, *Aesthetic Judgment and the Moral Image of the World: Studies in Kant*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.
F. Hughes, 'On aesthetic judgement and our relation to nature: Kant's concept of purposiveness', *Inquiry*, 2006, vol. 49, 547–72.
———, *Kant's Aesthetic Epistemology: Form and World*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.
B. Kalar, *Demands of Taste in Kant's Aesthetics*, London: Continuum, 2006.
S. Kemal, *Kant and Fine Art: An Essay on Kant and the Philosophy of Fine Art and Culture*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.
———, 'The importance of artistic beauty', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 104–26.
———, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory: An Introduction*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997. 2nd edition.
J. Kirwan, *The Aesthetic in Kant*, London: Continuum, 2006.
J. Kneller, 'Aesthetic value and the primacy of the practical in Kant's philosophy', *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 2002, vol. 36, 369–82.
R. Kukla, *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
A. Lazaroff, 'The Kantian sublime: aesthetic judgement and religious feeling', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 356–77.
J. F. Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, trans. E. Rottenberg, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.
M.A. McCloskey, *Kant's Aesthetic*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987.
R. Makkreel, 'Imagination and temporality in Kant's theory of the sublime', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 378–96.
———, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the 'Critique of Judgment'*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

P. de Man, 'Phenomenality and materiality in Kant', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 334–55.
K. Pillow, *Sublime Understanding: Aesthetic Reflection in Kant and Hegel*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000.
W.S. Pluhar, 'Translator's introduction', in I. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987.
A. Rehberg and R. Jones (eds), *The Matter of Critique*, London: Clinamen, 2000.
K.F. Rogerson, *Kant's Aesthetics: The Roles of Form and Expression*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1986.
———, 'The meaning of universal validity in Kant's aesthetics', in Chadwick and Cazeaux (eds), *Immanuel Kant: Critical Assessments* vol. 4, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 309–20.
———, *The Problem of Free Harmony in Kant's Aesthetics*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2008.
A. Ross, *The Aesthetic Paths of Philosophy: Presentation in Kant, Heidegger, Lacoue-Labarthe, and Nancy*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
F.L. Rush, 'The harmony of the faculties: Kant's general theory of cognition and his account of aesthetic judgment', *Kant-Studien*, 2001, vol. 92, 38–61.
A. Savile, *Kantian Aesthetics Pursued*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993.
E. Schaper, *Studies in Kant's Aesthetics*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979.
S. Shaviro, *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze, and Aesthetics*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009.
A. Wachter, 'The aesthetics of manners: the affinity of aesthetic emotion and practical rationality in Kant', *Kant-Studien*, 2006, vol. 97, 396–400.
H. Wenzel, *An Introduction to Kant's Aesthetics: Core Concepts and Problems*, Malden, Mass.: Wiley Blackwell, 2005.
J. Winchester, 'Understanding aesthetic judgments across cultural borders: bell hooks, Kant, Cornel West and the understanding of aesthetic judgments of others', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 2000, vol. 38, 499–525.
R. Zuckert, 'The purposiveness of form: a reading of Kant's aesthetic formalism', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 2006, vol. 44, 599–622.

Chapter 2

G.W.F. HEGEL

INTRODUCTION

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's (1770–1831) ambition is the same as Kant's: to reconcile the millennia-old philosophical oppositions of mind and reality, thought and substance. Kant ultimately fails in this, Hegel thinks, because he surrenders metaphysics, knowledge of things as they are in themselves (noumena), in contrast to things as they appear to empirical consciousness (phenomena). Kant's philosophy, for Hegel, is a form of subjectivism: Kant limits our knowledge to appearances, and places noumena or things in themselves beyond our grasp. This restriction is arguably present in Kant's admissions, in the first *Critique*, that we can *think* noumena but cannot *know* them[1] and, in the third, that 'judgment gives a law only to itself, not to nature'.[2]

The simple but far-reaching move Hegel makes in response to Kant is to assert that knowledge and reality are one. All the individual perceptions and experiences we have belong to a procession of thought that is moving towards the end of history. This ultimate and final unity Hegel terms 'Absolute Knowledge' or 'Absolute Spirit'. The basis for this metaphysics is the logical point that a unity, to be a unity, must be a unity of parts. In his *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, Hegel avows that it is the task of the philosophy 'to show how the Idea in logic has, in accordance with its own Concept, to transpose itself into natural existence and then, out of this externality, into spirit; and finally to free itself from the finitude of spirit again to become spirit in its eternity and truth' (*AI* 94).[3]

Organicism is intrinsic to Hegel's theory: one thing can generate out of itself a network of interrelated parts which work towards achieving unity again; the Idea, in accordance with its own Concept, transposes itself into natural existence. ('Idea' is the term Hegel uses to denote the ultimate unity between a concept and its object.) This is in keeping with the use of 'organism' in nineteenth-century romanticism as a metaphor for the creative process. In romantic aesthetics, a harmony is held to exist between artistic intuition and nature, and the artist generates insight, the theory has it, in virtue of the holistic nature of her practice. However, for Hegel, there is also a Platonic influence, to the extent that his ideas, in many respects, might be regarded as a revised, dynamic Platonism. In Plato's *Republic*, abstract, transcendental Forms *give shape and determination* to physical, sensory reality: our everyday world displays order and regular appearance, Plato maintains, because each individual thing (for example, a tree, a bicycle, happiness, justice) has been given its being by an original template. To explain how this determination takes place, Plato draws on the metaphor of nourishment:

> The sun [Socrates explains to Glaucon] not only makes the things we see visible, but causes the processes of generation, growth and nourishment, without itself being such a process... The [form of the] good therefore may be said to be the source not only of the intelligibility of the objects of knowledge, but also of their being and reality.[4]

Herein lies the basis of Hegel's part-whole idealism: what makes the objects of knowledge intelligible also nourishes them or brings them into being; perception, in some sense, creates its own object. As he writes in the *Logic* (1817), it is 'organic life' that corresponds to the development of the Idea:

> The plant is developed from its germ. The germ virtually involves the whole plant, but does so only ideally or in thought… The truth of the hypothesis… lies in its perceiving that in the process of development the notion keeps to itself and only gives rise to alteration of form, without making any addition in point of content.[5]

Knowledge is the unfolding of experiences and possibilities that are already implicit in original conscious awareness.

The relationship between thought and substance, for Hegel, is dynamic: a dialectic of subjectivity and objectivity through which human consciousness approaches the realization that mind and reality are one. The dialectic is first considered in Hegel's lectures at the University of Jena (1801–07) but receives its full, systematic exposition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). The unfolding of consciousness, he argues, is a cyclic, three-stage process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Uttering one judgment about an object (the thesis) makes the speaker aware that there is more to the object than her statement allows (the antithesis). A previously unrecognized or unconsidered aspect of the thing is brought to light, and so a revised judgment is made (a synthesis, which becomes the new thesis, and so the cycle continues). As Hegel writes in the *Phenomenology*: 'Consciousness recognizes that it is the *untruth* occurring in perception that falls within it. But by this very recognition it is able at once to supersede this untruth; it distinguishes its apprehension of the truth from the untruth of its perception, [and] corrects this untruth.'[6] Here, then, is another answer to Kant's problem of how subjective mind can offer objective judgment. Judgment, considered dynamically, necessarily includes within itself an awareness of its own partiality or contingency: producing a description or a representation records an aspect of the object and, in so doing, also draws attention to features which have not been taken into consideration. Whereas subjective appearance is traditionally thought to be of a different order than objective fact, with Hegel, subjectivity is precisely that which allows objectivity to come into being.

Art plays a significant role in Hegel's system. Hegel gave periodic lecture courses on the philosophy of art during the 1820s when he was Professor of Philosophy at Berlin, and his *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* is a reconstruction, made after his death, from student transcripts and his own lecture notes. The extract I have selected is from the 'Introduction' to the work, and outlines his three-fold division of the subject: symbolic, classical, and romantic.

Art's ultimate role in Hegel's system is to be the antithesis of thought: a representation which takes shape as an independent object *opposite* consciousness, and which consciousness recognizes as being both of itself and other than itself. This though does not mean that Hegel has a negative view of art. In the dialectical unfolding of consciousness, there is the necessary antithetical moment when the mind becomes aware that what is immediately before it is not entirely true or adequate, and so it is motivated to utter a further judgment. Art is the stimulation of enquiry through material estrangement:

> In the products of art, the spirit has to do solely with its own. And even if works of art are not thought or the Concept, but a development of the Concept out of itself, a shift of the Concept from its own ground to that of sense, still the power of the thinking spirit lies in being able not only to grasp itself in its proper form as thinking, but to know itself again just as much when it has surrendered its proper form to feeling and sense, to comprehend itself in its opposite,

> because it changes into thoughts what has been estranged and so reverts to itself... For the Concept is the universal which maintains itself in its particularizations, overreaches itself and its opposite, and so it is also the power and activity of cancelling again the estrangement in which it gets involved.
>
> (*A*I 12–13)

For Hegel, the artwork is the sensuous display of mind's relationship with external reality; it is material substance that has been imbued with mind. His three-fold division of the arts – symbolic, classical, and romantic – maps the relation between ideal or spiritual content and material form, and makes the former inversely proportionate to the latter. The subject of *symbolic* art, e.g. architecture, 'is matter itself in its immediate externality'; the shape is arbitrary and the reality presented 'remains opposed to the Idea, because it is something external not penetrated by the Idea' (*A*I 84). In *classical* art, material form is 'peculiarly appropriate to the Idea itself in its essential nature', e.g. sculpture depicting the human form. This is because the artist is recreating natural forms, shapes which she *finds* in nature, 'invented...for concrete spirit' by the original Concept (*A*I 77–78). However, even though Idea and sensuous form are in complete harmony, this is spirit 'which is still particular and therefore burdened with an abstraction' (*A*I 301). *Romantic* art, Hegel's highest classification, acknowledges that external representation is inadequate to the demands of thought and seeks to free itself from the burden of particularity. The category is represented by those forms which (he thinks) aspire to deny their materiality: painting liberates art from 'the *complete* sensuous spatiality of material things by being restricted to the dimensions of a *plane* surface' (*A*I 87); music is pure sound, and poetry (the highest) consists of 'sound as the mere indication of inner intuitions and ideas' (*A*I 86).

In what sense though is physical nature opposed to or antithetical to mind? Despite his claim that all moments in the development of consciousness are equally important and are only making explicit what is already implicit, Hegel nevertheless seems to follow the traditional philosophical practice of placing the mental higher than the physical. The beauty we perceive in art, Hegel argues, is higher than the beauty we see in nature for it is 'beauty born of the spirit', 'a shift of the Concept from its own ground to that of sense' (*A*I 2, 12). The torch-thistle 'withers in the wilds of the southern forests without having been admired'; the work of art though 'is not so naively self-centred': 'it is essentially a question, an address to the responsive breast, a call to the mind of the spirit' (*A*I 71). Nature is often described by him as 'spiritless' (*A*I 12) or 'soulless' (*A*I 116).

'Higher' though, as Hegel admits, is 'a quite vague expression' (*A*I 2). He defines his application of the term: spirit or mind is higher because 'spirit is alone the *true*, comprehending everything in itself, so that everything beautiful is truly beautiful only as sharing in this higher sphere and generated by it' (*A*I 2). The diverse and 'spiritless' particularities of nature approach ideality when they are perceived as belonging to a conceptual unity. He gives, as an example, the solar system: 'The suns, comets, moons, and planets appear, on the one hand, as heavenly bodies independent and different from one another; but, on the other hand, they are what they are only because of the determinate place they occupy in a total system of bodies' (*A*I 117). Hegel suggests other instances of physical particulars 'sharing' concepts: 'we must regard the body and its members as the existence of the systematic articulation of the Concept itself' (*A*I 119), and 'shape, whereby...content is made visible and imaginable, has the purpose of existing solely for our mind and spirit' (*A*I 71).

A tension arises from having to give a *linear*, dialectic account of what is also claimed to be a *self-present* unity. On the one hand, Hegel needs the *ontological* claim (concerning the

nature of reality) that all particulars belong to a unity yet, on the other, he is articulating the *epistemological* claim (concerning our perception of reality) that the awareness of this unity unfolds with time. Again, on the one hand, Hegel argues that particulars articulate or emerge from universals (an ontological thesis) yet, on the other, he asserts that the time will come when we know the world conceptually and no longer have to look (an epistemological thesis). If Hegel can be accused of maintaining the Cartesian divide between the mental and the physical, it is because language makes it impossible to describe something as a whole without first dividing it into components, one of which must come before the other, e.g. 'subject' and 'predicate', and, therefore, creating a hierarchy. Although it is often visualized in terms of clear and crystalline purity, any writer, mathematician, or theorist will tell you that concepts have a materiality of their own. It is a delicious irony that Hegel's appeals to ascension are made necessary by the recalcitrance of thought.

The artist, on Hegel's account, is always destined to be a martyr, to lay down her life in the interests of spirit's progress. For romanticism in Hegel marks the 'death of art' (not Hegel's phrase), when it 'passes over into higher forms of consciousness' (*A*I 102). Realizing that truth cannot reside in matter, thought turns to religion – 'removed from the objectivity of art into the inwardness of the subject' (*A*I 103) – and, finally, to the pure conceptuality of philosophy. I think though we miss Hegel's point if we take this to be the assertion that art's value is limited or finite. We ignore the demands he is making on our understanding of concepts and objects if we take 'passing over into higher forms' to mean the abrupt cessation of a life. The importance of art for Hegel resides in its being the *substantial* expression of ideas: matter presents a recalcitrance which makes thought tangible to consciousness. Hegel's theory of art offers valuable insights into the way the world resists or opposes our ideas.

He can perhaps be criticized for reducing the history of art to a general, linear scheme and excluding properties of art which do not conform to it. His framework assumes, without warrant, that the ontological nature of the *content* of a work should correspond to the ontological nature of its *form*. Architecture, he reasons, can only speak of earth and matter, whereas poetry deals with the inner and the spiritual. This is not the case; neither was it the case in Hegel's time. A building can stimulate thought just as much as a poem can emphasize embodiment. Nevertheless, he does anticipate modern western art. Since the invention of photography, the various revolutions in art have gradually peeled away the layers of art's physicality: from the impressionists painting light instead of objects, through the performative, non-representational project of abstraction, to conceptual art's simple sentences on gallery walls.

Notes

1 I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan, 1929, Bxxvi, p.27.
2 I. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. W.S. Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987, Ak. 185.
3 G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* vols. I and II, trans. T.M. Knox, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975. Page numbers refer to the first volume and appear in the main text, prefixed by '*A*I'.
4 Plato, *Republic*, trans. D. Lee, London: Penguin, 1987, 509b.
5 G.W.F. Hegel, *Logic*, trans. W. Wallace, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, pp. 224–25.
6 G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 72.

■ ■ ■

EXTRACTS FROM *AESTHETICS: LECTURES ON FINE ART*

G.W.F. HEGEL

1 Prefatory remarks

These lectures are devoted to Aesthetics. Their topic is the spacious *realm of the beautiful*; more precisely, their province is *art*, or, rather, *fine art*.

For this topic, it is true, the word Aesthetics, taken literally, is not wholly satisfactory, since 'Aesthetics' means, more precisely, the science of sensation, of feeling. In this sense it had its origin as a new science, or rather as something which for the first time was to become a philosophical discipline,[1] in the school of Wolff at the period in Germany when works of art were treated with regard to the feelings they were supposed to produce, as, for instance, the feeling of pleasure, admiration, fear, pity, and so on. Because of the unsatisfactoriness, or more accurately, the superficiality of this word, attempts were made after all to frame others, e.g. 'Callistics'. But this too appears inadequate because the science which is meant deals not with the beautiful as such but simply with the beauty of art. We will therefore let the word 'Aesthetics' stand; as a mere name it is a matter of indifference to us, and besides it has meanwhile passed over into common speech. As a name then it may be retained, but the proper expression for our science is *Philosophy of Art* and, more definitely, *Philosophy of Fine Art*.

2 Limitation and defence of aesthetics

By adopting this expression we at once exclude the beauty of nature. Such a limitation of our topic may appear to be laid down arbitrarily, on the principle that every science has authority to demarcate its scope at will. But this is not the sense in which we should take the limitation of aesthetics to the beauty of art. In ordinary life we are of course accustomed to speak of a beautiful colour, a beautiful sky, a beautiful river; likewise of beautiful flowers, beautiful animals, and even more of beautiful people. We will not here enter upon the controversy about how far the attribute of beauty is justifiably ascribed to these and the like, and how far, in general, natural beauty may be put alongside the beauty of art. But we may assert against this view, even at this stage, that the beauty of art is *higher* than nature. The beauty of art is beauty *born of the spirit and born again*,[2] and the higher the spirit and its productions stand above nature and its phenomena, the higher too is the beauty of art above that of nature. Indeed, considered *formally* [i.e. no matter what it says], even a useless notion that enters a man's head is higher than any product of nature, because in such a notion spirituality and freedom are always present. Of course, considered in its *content*, the sun, for example, appears as an absolutely necessary factor [in the universe] while a false notion vanishes as *accidental* and transitory. But, taken by itself, a natural existent like the sun is indifferent, not free and self-conscious in itself; and if we treat it in its necessary connection with other things, then we are not treating it by itself, and therefore not as beautiful.

Now if we said in general that spirit and its artistic beauty stands *higher* than natural beauty, then of course virtually nothing is settled, because 'higher' is a quite vague expression which describes natural and artistic beauty as still standing side by side in the space of imagination and differing only quantitatively and therefore externally. But what is *higher* about the spirit and its artistic beauty is not something merely relative in comparison with

nature. On the contrary, spirit is alone the *true*, comprehending everything in itself, so that everything beautiful is truly beautiful only as sharing in this higher sphere and generated by it. In this sense the beauty of nature appears only as a reflection of the beauty that belongs to spirit, as an imperfect incomplete mode [of beauty], a mode which in its *substance* is contained in the spirit itself. – Besides we shall find that a limitation to fine art arises very naturally, since, however much is said about the beauties of nature (less by the ancients than by us), it has not yet entered anyone's head to concentrate on the *beauty* of natural objects and make a science, a systematic exposition, of these beauties. A treatment from the point of view of *utility* has indeed been made and, for example, a scientific account of natural objects useful against diseases has been composed, a *materia medica*, a description of the minerals, chemical products, plants, or animals, which are useful for cures. But the realms of nature have not been classified and examined from the point of view of beauty. In [discussing] natural beauty we feel ourselves too much in a vague sphere, without a *criterion*, and therefore such a classification would provide too little interest for us to undertake it.

These preliminary remarks on beauty in nature and art, on the relation of the two, and the exclusion of the former from the scope of our proper subject, should dispose of the idea that the limitation is due merely to caprice and arbitrariness. The proof of this relation should not come here yet, since its consideration falls within our science itself and is therefore not to be further explained and proved until later [see Part I, ch. II].

But if we now limit ourselves provisionally to the beauty of art, this first step brings us at once up against new difficulties.

* * *

5 Concept of the beauty of art

After these preliminary remarks, we now come closer to our proper subject, the philosophy of the beauty of art, and, since we are undertaking to treat it scientifically, we have to make a beginning with its Concept. Only when we have established this Concept can we lay down the division, and therefore the plan, of the whole of this science. For a division, if not undertaken in a purely external manner, as it is in a nonphilosophical inquiry, must find its principle in the Concept of the subject-matter itself.

Confronted with such a requirement, we are at once met with the question 'whence do we derive this Concept?' If we start with the Concept itself of the beauty of art, it at once becomes a *presupposition* and a mere assumption; mere assumptions, however, philosophical method does not allow; on the contrary, what is to pass muster has to have its truth proved, i.e. has to be shown to be necessary.

About this difficulty, which affects the introduction to every philosophical discipline considered independently and by itself, we will come to an understanding in a short space.

In the case of the object of every science, two things come at once into consideration: (i) that there *is* such an object, and (ii) *what* it is.

On the first point little difficulty usually arises in the ordinary [i.e. physical] sciences. Why, it would at once be ridiculous to require astronomy and physics to prove that there are a sun, stars, magnetic phenomena, etc.! In these sciences which have to do with what is present to sensation, the objects are taken from experience of the external world, and instead of *proving* them, it is thought sufficient to *point* to them. Yet even within the non-philosophical disciplines, doubts may arise about the existence of their objects, as, for example, in psychology, the science of mind, there may be a doubt whether there *is* a soul, a spirit, i.e. an explicitly independent

subjective entity distinct from what is material; or in theology, a doubt whether there is a God. If, moreover, the objects are of a subjective sort, i.e. present only in the mind and not as things externally perceptible, we know that in mind there is only what its own activity has produced. Hence there arises at once the chance that men may or may not have produced this inner idea or intuition in themselves, and, even if the former is really the case, that they have not made such an idea vanish again, or at least degraded it to a purely subjective idea whose content has no independent reality of its own. Thus, for example, the beautiful has often been regarded as not being absolutely necessary in our ideas but as a purely subjective pleasure, or a merely accidental sense. Our intuitions, observations, and perceptions of the external world are often deceptive and erroneous, but this is even more true of our inner ideas, even if they have in themselves the greatest vividness and could carry us away into passion irresistibly.

Now the doubt whether an object of our inner ideas and general outlook *is* or is *not*, like the question whether subjective consciousness has generated it in itself and whether the manner and mode in which it has brought it before itself was also in correspondence with the object in its essential nature, is precisely what arouses in men the higher scientific need which demands that, even if we have a notion that an object is or that there is such an object, nevertheless the object must be exhibited or proved in accordance with its necessity.

With this proof, provided it be developed really scientifically, the other question of *what* an object is, is sufficiently answered at the same time. However, to expound this fully would take us too far afield at this point, and only the following indications can be given.

If the necessity of our subject, the beauty of art, is to be exhibited, we would have to prove that art or the beautiful was a result of an antecedent which, considered according to its true Concept, was such as to lead on with scientific necessity to the Concept of fine art. But since we begin with art and wish to treat of *its* Concept and the realization thereof, not of its antecedent in its essential character (the antecedent pursuant to its own Concept), art has for us, as a particular scientific subject-matter, a presupposition which lies outside our consideration and, handled scientifically as a different subject-matter, belongs to a different philosophical discipline. Thus the only course left to us is to take up the Concept of art *lemmatically*,[3] so to say, and this is the case with all particular philosophical sciences if they are to be treated *seriatim*. For it is only the *whole* of philosophy which is knowledge of the universe as in itself that *one* organic totality which develops itself out of its own Concept and which, in its self-relating necessity, withdrawing into itself to form a whole, closes with itself to form *one* world of truth. In the circlet of this scientific necessity each single part is on the one hand a circle returning into itself, while on the other hand it has at the same time a necessary connection with other parts. It has a backward whence it is itself derived, and a forward to which it ever presses itself on, in so far as it is fertile, engendering an 'other' out of itself once more, and issuing it for scientific knowledge. Thus it is not our present aim, but the task of an encyclopedic development of the whole of philosophy and its particular disciplines, to prove the Idea of the beautiful with which we began, i.e. to derive it necessarily from the presuppositions which antecede it in philosophy and out of the womb of which it is born. For us the Concept of the beautiful and art is a presupposition given by the system of philosophy. But since we cannot here expound this system and the connection of art with it, we have not yet got the Concept of the beautiful before us scientifically. What *is* before us is only elements and aspects of it as they occur already in the different ideas of the beautiful and art held by ordinary people, or have formerly been accepted by them. From this point we intend to pass on to a deeper consideration of these views in order to gain the advantage, in the first place, of acquiring a general idea of our subject, as well as, by a brief critique, a preliminary acquaintance with the higher determinations with which we will have to do in the sequel. In this way our final introductory treatment of the subject will present, as it were, an overture to the

lectures on the matter at issue and will tend [to provide] a general collection and direction [of our thoughts] to our proper subject.

* * *

8 Division of the subject

After the foregoing introductory remarks it is now time to pass on to the study of our subject itself. But the introduction, where we still are, can in this respect do no more than sketch for our apprehension a conspectus of the entire course of our subsequent scientific studies. But since we have spoken of art as itself proceeding from the absolute Idea, and have even pronounced its end to be the sensuous presentation of the Absolute itself, we must proceed, even in this conspectus, by showing, at least in general, how the particular parts of the subject emerge from the conception of artistic beauty as the presentation of the Absolute. Therefore we must attempt, in the most general way, to awaken an idea of this conception.

It has already been said that the content of art is the Idea, while its form is the configuration of sensuous material. Now art has to harmonize these two sides and bring them into a free reconciled totality. The *first* point here is the demand that the content which is to come into artistic representation should be in itself qualified for such representation. For otherwise we obtain only a bad combination, because in that case a content ill-adapted to figurativeness and external presentation is made to adopt this form, or, in other words, material explicitly prosaic is expected to find a really appropriate mode of presentation in the form antagonistic to its nature.

The *second* demand, derived from the first, requires of the content of art that it be not anything abstract in itself, but concrete, though not concrete in the sense in which the sensuous is concrete when it is contrasted with everything spiritual and intellectual and these are taken to be simple and abstract. For everything genuine in spirit and nature alike is inherently concrete and, despite its universality, has nevertheless subjectivity and particularity in itself. If we say, for example, of God that he is simply *one*, the supreme being as such, we have thereby only enunciated a dead abstraction of the sub-rational Understanding. Such a God, not apprehended himself in his concrete truth, will provide no content for art, especially not for visual art. Therefore the Jews and the Turks have not been able by art to represent their God, who does not even amount to such an abstraction of the Understanding, in the positive way that the Christians have. For in Christianity God is set forth in his truth, and therefore as thoroughly concrete in himself, as person, as subject, and, more closely defined, as spirit. What he is as spirit is made explicit for religious apprehension as a Trinity of Persons, which yet at the same time is self-aware as *one*. Here we have essentiality or universality, and particularization, together with their reconciled unity, and only such unity is the concrete. Now since a content, in order to be true at all, must be of this concrete kind, art too demands similar concreteness, because the purely abstract universal has not in itself the determinate character of advancing to particularization and phenomenal manifestation and to unity with itself in these.

Now, *thirdly*, if a sensuous form and shape is to correspond with a genuine and therefore concrete content, it must likewise be something individual, in itself completely concrete and single. The fact that the concrete accrues to both sides of art, i.e. to both content and its presentation, is precisely the point in which both can coincide and correspond with one another; just as, for instance, the natural shape of the human body is such a sensuously concrete thing, capable of displaying spirit, which is concrete in itself, and of showing itself in conformity with it. Therefore, after all, we must put out of our minds the idea that it is purely a matter of chance that to serve as such a genuine shape an actual phenomenon of the external world is selected. For art does not seize upon this form either

because it just finds it there or because there is no other; on the contrary, the concrete content itself involves the factor of external, actual, and indeed even sensuous manifestation. But then in return this sensuous concrete thing, which bears the stamp of an essentially spiritual content, is also essentially *for* our inner [apprehension]; the external shape, whereby the content is made visible and imaginable, has the purpose of existing solely for our mind and spirit. For this reason alone are content and artistic form fashioned in conformity with one another. The *purely* sensuously concrete – external nature as such – does not have this purpose for the sole reason of its origin. The variegated richly coloured plumage of birds shines even when unseen, their song dies away unheard; the torch-thistle, which blooms for only one night, withers in the wilds of the southern forests without having been admired, and these forests, jungles themselves of the most beautiful and luxuriant vegetation, with the most sweet-smelling and aromatic perfumes, rot and decay equally unenjoyed. But the work of art is not so naïvely self-centred; it is essentially a question, an address to the responsive breast, a call to the mind and the spirit.

Although illustration by art is not in this respect a matter of chance, it is, on the other hand, not the highest way of apprehending the spiritually concrete. The higher way, in contrast to representation by means of the sensuously concrete, is thinking, which in a relative sense is indeed abstract, but it must be concrete, not one-sided, if it is to be true and rational. How far a specific content has its appropriate form in sensuous artistic representation, or whether, owing to its own nature, it essentially demands a higher, more spiritual, form, is a question of the distinction which appears at once, for example, in a comparison between the Greek gods and God as conceived by Christian ideas. The Greek god is not abstract but individual, closely related to the natural [human] form. The Christian God too is indeed a concrete personality, but is *pure* spirituality and is to be known as *spirit* and in spirit. His medium of existence is therefore essentially inner knowledge and not the external natural form through which he can be represented only imperfectly and not in the whole profundity of his nature.

But since art has the task of presenting the Idea to immediate perception in a sensuous shape and not in the form of thinking and pure spirituality as such, and, since this presenting has its value and dignity in the correspondence and unity of both sides, i.e. the Idea and its outward shape, it follows that the loftiness and excellence of art in attaining a reality adequate to its Concept will depend on the degree of inwardness and unity in which Idea and shape appear fused into one.

In this point of higher truth, as the spirituality which the artistic formation has achieved in conformity with the Concept of spirit, there lies the basis for the division of the philosophy of art. For, before reaching the true Concept of its absolute essence, the spirit has to go through a course of stages, a series grounded in this Concept itself; and to this course of the content which the spirit gives to itself there corresponds a course, immediately connected therewith, of configurations of art, in the form of which the spirit, as artist, gives itself a consciousness of itself.

This course within the spirit of art has itself in turn, in accordance with its own nature, two sides. *First*, this development is itself a spiritual and universal one, since the sequence of definite conceptions of the world, as the definite but comprehensive consciousness of nature, man, and God, gives itself artistic shape.[4] *Secondly*, this inner development of art has to give itself immediate existence and sensuous being, and the specific modes of the sensuous being of art are themselves a totality of necessary differences in art, i.e. *the particular arts*. Artistic configuration and its differences are, on the one hand, as spiritual, of a more universal kind and not bound to *one* material [e.g. stone or paint], and sensuous existence is itself differentiated in numerous ways; but since this existence, like spirit, has the Concept implicitly for its inner soul, a specific sensuous material does thereby, on the other hand, acquire a closer relation and a secret harmony with the spiritual differences and forms of artistic configuration.

However, in its completeness our science is divided into three main sections:

First, we acquire a *universal* part. This has for its content and subject both the universal Idea of artistic beauty as the Ideal, and also the nearer relation of the Ideal to nature on the one hand and to subjective artistic production on the other.

Secondly, there is developed out of the conception of artistic beauty a *particular* part, because the essential differences contained in this conception unfold into a sequence of particular forms of artistic configuration.

Thirdly, there is a *final* part which has to consider the individualization of artistic beauty, since art advances to the sensuous realization of its creations and rounds itself off in a system of single arts and their genera and species.

(i) The Idea of the beauty of art or the Ideal

In the first place, so far as the first and second parts are concerned, we must at once, if what follows is to be made intelligible, recall again that the Idea as the beauty of art is not the Idea as such, in the way that a metaphysical logic has to apprehend it as the Absolute, but the Idea as shaped forward into reality and as having advanced to immediate unity and correspondence with this reality. For the *Idea as such* is indeed the absolute truth itself, but the truth only in its not yet objectified universality, while the Idea as the *beauty of art* is the Idea with the nearer qualification of being both essentially individual reality and also an individual configuration of reality destined essentially to embody and reveal the Idea. Accordingly there is here expressed the demand that the Idea and its configuration as a concrete reality shall be made completely adequate to one another. Taken thus, the Idea as reality, shaped in accordance with the Concept of the Idea, is the *Ideal*.

The problem of such correspondence might in the first instance be understood quite formally in the sense that any Idea at all might serve, if only the actual shape, no matter which, represented precisely this specific Idea. But in that case the demanded *truth* of the Ideal is confused with mere *correctness* which consists in the expression of some meaning or other in an appropriate way and therefore the direct rediscovery of its sense in the shape produced. The Ideal is not to be thus understood. For any content can be represented quite adequately, judged by the standard of its own essence, without being allowed to claim the artistic beauty of the Ideal. Indeed, in comparison with ideal beauty, the representation will even appear defective. In this regard it may be remarked in advance, what can only be proved later, namely that the defectiveness of a work of art is not always to be regarded as due, as may be supposed, to the artist's lack of skill; on the contrary, defectiveness of *form* results from defectiveness of *content*. So, for example, the Chinese, Indians, and Egyptians, in their artistic shapes, images of gods, and idols, never get beyond formlessness or a bad and untrue definiteness of form. They could not master true beauty because their mythological ideas, the content and thought of their works of art, were still indeterminate, or determined badly, and so did not consist of the content which is absolute in itself. Works of art are all the more excellent in expressing true beauty, the deeper is the inner truth of their content and thought. And in this connection we are not merely to think, as others may, of any greater or lesser skill with which natural forms as they exist in the external world are apprehended and imitated. For, in certain stages of art-consciousness and presentation, the abandonment and distortion of natural formations is not unintentional lack of technical skill or practice, but international alteration which proceeds from and is demanded by what is in the artist's mind. Thus, from this point of view, there is imperfect art which in technical and other respects may be quite perfect in its *specific* sphere, and yet it is clearly defective in comparison with the concept of art itself and the Ideal.

Only in the highest art are Idea and presentation truly in conformity with one another, in the sense that the shape given to the Idea is in itself the absolutely true shape, because the content of

the Idea which that shape expresses is itself the true and genuine content. Associated with this, as has already been indicated, is the fact that the Idea must be determined in and through itself as a concrete totality, and therefore possess in itself the principle and measure of its particularization and determinacy in external appearance. For example, the Christian imagination will be able to represent God in human form and its expression of *spirit*, only because God himself is here completely known in himself as *spirit*. Determinacy is, as it were, the bridge to appearance. Where this determinacy is not a totality emanating from the Idea itself, where the Idea is not presented as self-determining and self-particularizing, the Idea remains abstract and has its determinacy, and therefore the principle for its particular and solely appropriate mode of appearance, not in itself, but outside itself. On this account, then, the still abstract Idea has its shape also external to itself, not settled by itself. On the other hand, the inherently concrete Idea carries within itself the principle of its mode of appearance and is therefore its own free configurator. Thus the truly concrete Idea alone produces its true configuration, and this correspondence of the two is the Ideal.

(ii) Development of the Ideal into the particular forms of the beauty of art

But because the Idea is in this way a concrete unity, this unity can enter the art-consciousness only through the unfolding and then the reconciliation of the particularizations of the Idea, and, through this development, artistic beauty acquires a *totality of particular stages and forms*. Therefore, after studying artistic beauty in itself and on its own account, we must see how beauty as a whole decomposes into its particular determinations. This gives, as the *second* part of our study, the doctrine of the *forms of art*. These forms find their origin in the different ways of grasping the Idea as content, whereby a difference in the configuration in which the Idea appears is conditioned. Thus the forms of art are nothing but the different relations of meaning and shape, relations which proceed from the Idea itself and therefore provide the true basis for the division of this sphere. For division must always be implicit in the concept, the particularization and division of which is in question.

We have here to consider *three* relations of the Idea to its configuration.

(a) First, art begins when the Idea, still in its indeterminacy and obscurity, or in bad and untrue determinacy, is made the content of artistic shapes. Being indeterminate, it does not yet possess in itself that individuality which the Ideal demands; its abstraction and one-sidedness leave its shape externally defective and arbitrary. The first form of art is therefore rather a *mere search* for portrayal than a capacity for true presentation; the Idea has not found the form even in itself and therefore remains struggling and striving after it. We may call this form, in general terms, the *symbolic* form of art. In it the abstract Idea has its shape outside itself in the natural sensuous material from which the process of shaping starts[5] and with which, in its appearance, this process is linked. Perceived natural objects are, on the one hand, primarily left as they are, yet at the same time the substantial Idea is imposed on them as their meaning so that they now acquire a vocation to express it and so are to be interpreted as if the Idea itself were present in them. A corollary of this is the fact that natural objects have in them an aspect according to which they are capable of representing a universal meaning. But since a complete correspondence is not yet possible, this relation can concern only an *abstract* characteristic, as when, for example, in a lion strength is meant.

On the other hand, the abstractness of this relation brings home to consciousness even so the foreignness of the Idea to natural phenomena, and the Idea, which has no other reality to express it, launches out in all these shapes, seeks itself in them in their unrest and extravagance, but yet does not find them adequate to itself. So now the Idea exaggerates natural shapes and the phenomena of reality itself into indefiniteness and extravagance; it staggers round in them, it bubbles and ferments in them, does violence to them, distorts and stretches them unnaturally,

and tries to elevate their phenomenal appearance to the Idea by the diffuseness, immensity, and splendour of the formations employed. For the Idea is here still more or less indeterminate and unshapable, while the natural objects are thoroughly determinate in their shape.

In the incompatibility of the two sides to one another, the relation of the Idea to the objective world therefore becomes a *negative* one, since the Idea, as something inward, is itself unsatisfied by such externality, and, as the inner universal substance thereof, it persists *sublime* above all this multiplicity of shapes which do not correspond with it. In the light of this sublimity, the natural phenomena and human forms and events are accepted, it is true, and left as they are, but yet they are recognized at the same time as incompatible with their meaning which is raised far above all mundane content.

These aspects constitute in general the character of the early artistic pantheism of the East, which on the one hand ascribes absolute meaning to even the most worthless objects, and, on the other, violently coerces the phenomena to express its view of the world whereby it becomes bizarre, grotesque, and tasteless, or turns the infinite but abstract freedom of the substance [i.e. the one Lord] disdainfully against all phenomena as being null and evanescent. By this means the meaning cannot be completely pictured in the expression and, despite all striving and endeavour, the incompatibility of Idea and shape still remains unconquered. – This may be taken to be the first form of art, the symbolic form with its quest, its fermentation, its mysteriousness, and its sublimity.

(b) In the *second* form of art which we will call the *classical*, the double defect of the symbolic form is extinguished. The symbolic shape is imperfect because, (i) in it the Idea is presented to consciousness only as indeterminate or determined *abstractly*, and, (ii) for this reason the correspondence of meaning and shape is always defective and must itself remain purely abstract. The classical art-form clears up this double defect; it is the free and adequate embodiment of the Idea in the shape peculiarly appropriate to the Idea itself in its essential nature. With this shape, therefore, the Idea is able to come into free and complete harmony. Thus the classical art-form is the first to afford the production and vision of the completed Ideal and to present it as actualized in fact.

Nevertheless, the conformity of concept and reality in classical art must not be taken in the purely *formal* sense of a correspondence between a content and its external configuration, any more than this could be the case with the Ideal itself. Otherwise every portrayal of nature, every cast of features, every neighbourhood, flower, scene, etc., which constitutes the end and content of the representation, would at once be classical on the strength of such congruity between content and form. On the contrary, in classical art the peculiarity of the content consists in its being itself the concrete Idea, and as such the concretely spiritual, for it is the spiritual alone which is the truly inner [self]. Consequently, to suit such a content we must try to find out what in nature belongs to the spiritual in and for itself. The *original* Concept[6] itself it must be which *invented* the shape for concrete spirit, so that now the *subjective* Concept – here the spirit of art – has merely *found* this shape and made it, as a natural shaped existent, appropriate to free individual spirituality. This shape, which the Idea as spiritual – indeed as individually determinate spirituality – assumes when it is to proceed out into a temporal manifestation, is the human form. Of course personification and anthropomorphism have often been maligned as a degradation of the spiritual, but in so far as art's task is to bring the spiritual before our eyes in a sensuous manner, it must get involved in this anthropomorphism, since spirit appears sensuously in a satisfying way only in its body. The transmigration of souls is in this respect an abstract idea,[7] and physiology should have made it one of its chief propositions that life in its development had necessarily to proceed to the human form as the one and only sensuous appearance appropriate to spirit.

But the human body in its forms counts in classical art no longer as a merely sensuous existent, but only as the existence and natural shape of the spirit, and it must therefore be exempt from all

the deficiency of the purely sensuous and from the contingent finitude of the phenomenal world. While in this way the shape is purified in order to express in itself a content adequate to itself, on the other hand, if the correspondence of meaning and shape is to be perfect, the spirituality, which is the content, must be of such a kind that it can express itself completely in the natural human form, without towering beyond and above this expression in sensuous and bodily terms. Therefore here the spirit is at once determined as particular and human, not as purely absolute and eternal, since in this latter sense it can proclaim and express itself only as spirituality.

This last point in its turn is the defect which brings about the dissolution of the classical art-form and demands a transition to a higher form, the *third*, namely the *romantic*.

(c) The romantic form of art cancels again the completed unification of the Idea and its reality, and reverts, even if in a higher way, to that difference and opposition of the two sides which in symbolic art remained unconquered. The classical form of art has attained the pinnacle of what illustration by art could achieve, and if there is something defective in it, the defect is just art itself and the restrictedness of the sphere of art. This restrictedness lies in the fact that art in general takes as its subject-matter the spirit (i.e. the *universal*, infinite and concrete in its nature) in a *sensuously* concrete form, and classical art presents the complete unification of spiritual and sensuous existence as the *correspondence* of the two. But in this blending of the two, spirit is not in fact represented in its *true nature*. For spirit is the infinite subjectivity of the Idea, which as absolute inwardness cannot freely and truly shape itself outwardly on condition of remaining moulded into a bodily existence as the one appropriate to it.[8]

Abandoning this [classical] principle, the romantic form of art cancels the undivided unity of classical art because it has won a content which goes beyond and above the classical form of art and its mode of expression. This content – to recall familiar ideas – coincides with what Christianity asserts of God as a spirit, in distinction from the Greek religion which is the essential and most appropriate content for classical art. In classical art the concrete content is *implicitly* the unity of the divine nature with the human, a unity which, just because it is only immediate and implicit, is adequately manifested also in an immediate and sensuous way. The Greek god is the object of naïve intuition and sensuous imagination, and therefore his shape is the bodily shape of man. The range of his power and his being is individual and particular. Contrasted with the individual he is a substance and power with which the individual's inner being is only implicitly at one but without itself possessing this oneness as inward subjective knowledge. Now the higher state is the *knowledge* of that *implicit* unity which is the content of the classical art-form and is capable of perfect presentation in bodily shape. But this elevation of the implicit into self-conscious knowledge introduces a tremendous difference. It is the infinite difference which, for example, separates man from animals. Man is an animal, but even in his animal functions, he is not confined to the implicit, as the animal is; he becomes conscious of them, recognizes them, and lifts them, as, for instance, the process of digestion, into self-conscious science. In this way man breaks the barrier of his implicit and immediate character, so that precisely because he *knows* that he is an animal, he ceases to be an animal and attains knowledge of himself as spirit.

Now if in this way what was implicit at the previous stage, the unity of divine and human nature, is raised from an *immediate* to a *known* unity, the *true* element for the realization of this content is no longer the sensuous immediate existence of the spiritual in the bodily form of man, but instead the *inwardness of self-consciousness*. Now Christianity brings God before our imagination as spirit, not as an individual, particular spirit, but as absolute in spirit and in truth. For this reason it retreats from the sensuousness of imagination into spiritual inwardness and makes this, and not the body, the medium and the existence of truth's content. Thus the unity of divine and human nature is a known unity, one to be realized only by *spiritual* knowing and *in spirit*. The new content, thus won, is on this account not tied to sensuous presentation, as if

that corresponded to it, but is freed from this immediate existence which must be set down as negative, overcome, and reflected into the spiritual unity. In this way romantic art is the self-transcendence of art but within its own sphere and in the form of art itself.

We may, therefore, in short, adhere to the view that at this third stage the subject-matter of art is *free concrete spirituality*, which is to be manifested as *spirituality* to the spiritually inward. In conformity with this subject-matter, art cannot work for sensuous intuition. Instead it must, on the one hand, work for the inwardness which coalesces with its object simply as if with itself, for subjective inner depth, for reflective emotion, for feeling which, as spiritual, strives for freedom in itself and seeks and finds its reconciliation only in the inner spirit. This *inner* world constitutes the content of the romantic sphere and must therefore be represented as this inwardness and in the pure appearance of this depth of feeling. Inwardness celebrates its triumph over the external and manifests its victory in and on the external itself, whereby what is apparent to the senses alone sinks into worthlessness.

On the other hand, however, this romantic form too, like all art, needs an external medium for its expression. Now since spirituality has withdrawn into itself out of the external world and immediate unity therewith, the sensuous externality of shape is for this reason accepted and represented, as in symbolic art, as something inessential and transient; and the same is true of the subjective finite spirit and will, right down to the particularity and caprice of individuality, character, action, etc., of incident, plot, etc. The aspect of external existence is consigned to contingency and abandoned to the adventures devised by an imagination whose caprice can mirror what is present to it, *exactly as it is*, just as readily as it can jumble the shapes of the external world and distort them grotesquely. For this external medium has its essence and meaning no longer, as in classical art, in itself and its own sphere, but in the heart which finds its manifestation in itself instead of in the external world and *its* form of reality, and this reconciliation with itself it can preserve or regain in every chance, in every accident that takes independent shape, in all misfortune and grief, and indeed even in crime.

Thereby the separation of Idea and shape, their indifference and inadequacy to each other, come to the fore again, as in symbolic art, but with this essential difference, that, in romantic art, the Idea, the deficiency of which in the symbol brought with it deficiency of shape, now has to appear *perfected* in itself as spirit and heart. Because of this higher perfection, it is not susceptible of an adequate union with the external, since its true reality and manifestation it can seek and achieve only within itself.

This we take to be the general character of the symbolic, classical, and romantic forms of art, as the three relations of the Idea to its shape in the sphere of art. They consist in the striving for, the attainment, and the transcendence of the Ideal as the true Idea of beauty.

(iii) The system of the individual arts

Now the *third* part of our subject, in contradistinction from the two just described, presupposes the concept of the Ideal and also the three general forms of art, since it is only the realization of these in specific sensuous materials. Therefore we now no longer have to do with the inner development of artistic beauty in its general fundamental characteristics. Instead we have to consider how these characteristics pass into existence, are distinguished from one another externally, and actualize every feature in the conception of beauty independently and explicitly as a *work of art* and not merely as a *general form*. But since it is the differences immanent in the Idea of beauty, and proper to it, that art transfers into external existence, it follows that in this Part III the general forms of art must likewise be the fundamental principle for the articulation and determination of the individual arts; in other words, the kinds of art have the same essential distinctions in themselves which we came to recognize in the general forms of art. Now the

external objectivity into which these forms are introduced through a sensuous and therefore *particular* material, makes these forms *fall apart* from one another independently, to become distinct ways of their realization, i.e. the particular arts. For each form finds its specific character also in a specific external material, and its adequate realization in the mode of portrayal which that material requires. But, on the other hand, these art-forms, universal as they are despite their determinateness, break the bounds of a *particular* realization through a *specific* kind of art and achieve their existence equally through the other arts, even if in a subordinate way. Therefore the particular arts belong, on the one hand, specifically to *one* of the general forms of art and they shape its adequate external artistic actuality, and, on the other hand, in their own individual way of shaping externality, they present the totality of the forms of art.[9]

In general terms, that is to say, in Part III of our subject we have to deal with the beauty of art as it unfolds itself, in the arts and their productions, into a world of actualized beauty. The content of this world is the beautiful, and the true beautiful, as we saw, is spirituality given shape, the Ideal, and, more precisely, absolute spirit, the truth itself. This region of divine truth, artistically represented for contemplation and feeling, forms the centre of the whole world of art. It is the independent, free, and divine shape which has completely mastered the externality of form and material and wears it only as a manifestation of itself. Still, since the beautiful develops itself in this region as *objective* reality and therefore distinguishes within itself its single aspects and factors, granting them independent particularity, it follows that this centre now arrays its extremes, realized in their appropriate actuality, as contrasted with itself. One of these extremes therefore forms a still *spiritless objectivity*, the merely natural environment of God. Here the external as such takes shape as something having its spiritual end and content not in itself but in another.

The other extreme is the Divine as inward, as something known, as the variously particularized *subjective* existence of the Deity: the truth as it is effective and living in the sense, heart, and spirit of individual persons, not remaining poured out into its external shape, but returning into the subjective individual inner life. Thereby the Divine as such is at the same time distinguished from its pure manifestation as *Deity*, and thereby enters itself into the particularity characteristic of all individual subjective knowledge, emotion, perception, and feeling. In the analogous sphere of religion, with which art at its highest stage is immediately connected, we conceive this same difference as follows. *First*, earthly natural life in its finitude confronts us on one side; but then, *secondly*, our consciousness makes *God* its object wherein the difference of objectivity and subjectivity falls away, until, *thirdly*, and lastly, we advance from God as such to worship by the *community*, i.e. to God as living and present in subjective consciousness. These three fundamental differences arise also in the world of art in independent development.

(a) The *first* of the particular arts, the one with which we have to begin in accordance with this fundamental characterization of them, is *architecture* as a fine art. Its task consists in so manipulating external inorganic nature that, as an external world conformable to art, it becomes cognate to spirit. Its material is matter itself in its immediate externality as a mechanical heavy mass, and its forms remain the forms of inorganic nature, set in order according to relations of the abstract Understanding, i.e. relations of symmetry. In this material and in these forms the Ideal, as concrete spirituality, cannot be realized. Hence the reality presented in them remains opposed to the Idea, because it is something external not penetrated by the Idea or only in an abstract relation to it. Therefore the fundamental type of the art of building is the *symbolic* form of art. For architecture is the first to open the way for the adequate actuality of the god, and in his service it slaves away with objective nature in order to work it free from the jungle of finitude and the monstrosity of chance. Thereby it levels a place for the god, forms his external environment, and builds for him his temple as the place for the inner composure of the spirit and

its direction on its absolute objects. It raises an enclosure for the assembly of the congregation, as protection against the threat of storm, against rain, tempest, and wild animals, and it reveals in an artistic way, even if in an external one, the wish to assemble. This meaning it can build into its material and the forms thereof with greater or lesser effect, in proportion as the determinate character of the content for which it undertakes its work is more significant or insignificant, more concrete or abstract, more profoundly plumbing its own depths, or more obscure and superficial. Indeed in this respect architecture may itself attempt to go so far as to fashion in its forms and material an adequate artistic existence for that content; but in that event it has already stepped beyond its own sphere and is swinging over to sculpture, the stage above it. For its limitation lies precisely in retaining the spiritual, as something inner, over against its own external forms and thus pointing to what has soul only as to something distinct from these.

(b) But by architecture, after all, the inorganic external world has been purified, set in order symmetrically, and made akin to spirit, and the god's temple, the house of his community, stands there ready. Then into this temple, *secondly*, the god enters himself as the lightning-flash of individuality striking and permeating the inert mass, and the infinite, and no longer merely symmetrical, form of spirit itself concentrates and gives shape to something corporeal. This is the task of *sculpture*.

In so far as in sculpture the spiritual inner life, at which architecture can only hint, makes itself at home in the sensuous shape and its external material, and in so far as these two sides are so mutually formed that neither preponderates, sculpture acquires the *classical* art-form as its fundamental type. Therefore, no expression is left to the sensuous which is not an expression of spirit itself, just as, conversely, for sculpture no spiritual content can be perfectly represented unless it can be fully and adequately presented to view in bodily form. For through sculpture the spirit should stand before us in blissful tranquillity in its bodily form and in immediate unity therewith, and the form should be brought to life by the content of spiritual individuality. So the external sensuous material is no longer processed either according to its mechanical quality alone, as a mass possessing weight, or in forms of the inorganic world, or as indifferent to colour, etc., but in the ideal forms of the human figure and in all three spatial dimensions too. In this last respect we must claim for sculpture that in it the inward and the spiritual come into appearance for the first time in their eternal peace and essential self-sufficiency. To this peace and unity with itself only that external shape corresponds which itself persists in this unity and peace. This is shape according to its *abstract spatiality*.[10] The spirit which sculpture presents is spirit compact in itself, not variously splintered into the play of accidents and passions. Consequently sculpture does not abandon spirit's external form to this variety of appearance, but picks up therein only this one aspect, abstract spatiality in the totality of its dimensions.

(c) Now when architecture has built its temple and the hand of sculpture has set up within it the statues of the god, this sensuously present god is confronted, *thirdly*, in the wide halls of his house, by the *community*. The community is the spiritual reflection into itself of this sensuous existent, and is animating subjectivity and inwardness. With these, therefore, it comes about that the determining principle, alike for the content of art and for the material that represents it outwardly, is particularization and individualization and their requisite subjective apprehension. The compact unity in itself which the god has in sculpture disperses into the plurality of the inner lives of individuals whose unity is not sensuous but purely ideal.[11] And so only here is God himself truly spirit, spirit in his community, God as this to-and-fro, as this exchange of his inherent unity with his actualization in subjective knowing and its individualization as well as in the universality and union of the multitude. In the community God is released alike from the abstraction of undeveloped self-identity and from his sculptural representation as immediately immersed in a bodily medium; and he is raised to spirituality and knowledge, i.e. to spirit's mirror-image which essentially appears as inward and as subjectivity. Consequently the higher content is now the spiritual, the spiritual as absolute. But at

the same time, owing to the dispersal mentioned just now, the spiritual appears here as *particular* spirituality, an individual mind. And it is not the self-sufficient peace of the god in himself, but appearance as such, being *for* another, that manifestation of the self, which comes to the fore here as the chief thing; so now what becomes on its own account an object of artistic representation is the most manifold subjectivity in its living movement and activity as human passion, action, and adventure, and, in general, the wide range of human feeling, willing, and neglect.

Now in conformity with this content the sensuous element in art has likewise to show itself particularized in itself and appropriate to subjective inwardness. Material for this is afforded by colour, musical sound, and finally sound as the mere indication of inner intuitions and ideas. And as modes of realizing the content in question by means of these materials we have painting, music, and poetry. Here the sensuous medium appears as particularized in itself and posited throughout as ideal. Thus it best corresponds with the generally spiritual content of art, and the connection of spiritual meaning with sensuous material grows into a deeper intimacy than was possible in architecture and sculpture. Nevertheless this is a more inner unity which lies entirely on the subjective side, and which, in so far as form and content have to particularize themselves and posit themselves as ideal, can only come about at the expense of the objective universality of the content and its fusion with the immediately sensuous element.

Now in these arts form and content raise themselves to ideality, and thus, since they leave behind symbolic architecture and the classical idea of sculpture, they acquire their type from the *romantic* form of art on whose mode of configuration they are adapted to impress themselves in the most appropriate manner. But they are a totality of arts, because the romantic is in itself the most concrete form of art.

The inner articulation of this *third sphere* of the individual arts may be established as follows:

(α) The *first* art, standing next to sculpture, is *painting*. It uses as material for its content, and its content's configuration, visibility as such, in so far as this is at the same time particularized, i.e. developed into colour. True, the material of architecture and sculpture is likewise visible and coloured, but it is not, as in painting, the making visible as such; it is not the simple light which, differentiating itself in its contrast with darkness, and in combination therewith, becomes colour.[12] This quality of visibility inherently subjectivized and posited as ideal, needs neither the abstract mechanical difference of mass operative in heavy matter, as in architecture, nor the totality of sensuous spatiality which sculpture retains, even if concentrated and in organic shapes. On the contrary, the visibility and the making visible which belong to painting have their differences in a more ideal way, i.e. in the particular colours, and they free art from the *complete* sensuous spatiality of material things by being restricted to the dimensions of a *plane* surface.

On the other hand, the content too attains the widest particularization. Whatever can find room in the human breast as feeling, idea, and purpose, whatever it is capable of shaping into act, all this multiplex material can constitute the variegated content of painting. The whole realm of particularity from the highest ingredients of spirit right down to the most isolated natural objects finds its place here. For even finite nature in its particular scenes and phenomena can come on the stage in painting, if only some allusion to an element of spirit allies it more closely with thought and feeling.

(β) The *second* art through which the romantic form is actualized is, as contrasted with painting, *music*. Its material, though still sensuous, proceeds to still deeper subjectivity and particularization. I mean that music's positing of the sensuous as ideal is to be sought in the fact that it cancels, and idealizes into the individual singularity of one point, the indifferent self-externality of space, the total appearance of which is accepted by painting and deliberately simulated. But as this negativity, the point is concrete in itself and an active cancellation within the material by being a movement and tremor of the material body in itself in its relation to itself.

This incipient ideality of matter, which appears no longer as spatial but as temporal ideality, is sound: the sensuous set down as negated with its abstract visibility changed into audibility, since sound releases the Ideal, as it were, from its entanglement in matter.[13]

Now this earliest inwardness and ensouling of matter affords the material for the still indefinite inwardness and soul of the spirit, and in its tones makes the whole gamut of the heart's feelings and passions resound and die away. In this manner, just as sculpture stands as the centre between architecture and the arts of romantic subjectivity, so music forms the centre of the romantic arts and makes the point of transition between the abstract spatial sensuousness of painting and the abstract spirituality of poetry. Like architecture, music has in itself, as an antithesis to feeling and inwardness, a relation of quantity conformable to the mathematical intellect; it also has as its basis a fixed conformity to law on the part of the notes and their combination and succession.

(γ) Finally, as for the *third*, most spiritual presentation of romantic art, we must look for it in *poetry*. Its characteristic peculiarity lies in the power with which it subjects to spirit and its ideas the sensuous element from which music and painting began to make art free. For sound, the last external material which poetry keeps, is in poetry no longer the feeling of sonority itself, but a *sign*, by itself void of significance, a sign of the idea which has become concrete in itself, and not merely of indefinite feeling and its nuances and gradations. Sound in this way becomes a *word* as a voice inherently articulated, the meaning of which is to indicate ideas and thoughts. The inherently negative point to which music had moved forward now comes forth as the completely concrete point, as the point of the spirit, as the self-conscious individual who out of his own resources unites the infinite *space* of his ideas with the *time* of sound. Yet this sensuous element, which in music was still immediately one with inwardness, is here cut free from the content of consciousness, while spirit determines this content on its own account and in itself and makes it into ideas. To express these it uses sound indeed, but only as a sign in itself without value or content. The sound, therefore, may just as well be a mere letter, since the audible, like the visible, has sunk into being a mere indication of spirit. Therefore the proper element of poetical representation is the poetical *imagination* and the illustration of spirit itself, and since this element is common to all the art-forms, poetry runs through them all and develops itself independently in each of them. Poetry is the universal art of the spirit which has become free in itself and which is not tied down for its realization to external sensuous material; instead, it launches out exclusively in the inner space and the inner time of ideas and feelings. Yet, precisely, at this highest stage, art now transcends itself, in that it forsakes the element of a reconciled embodiment of the spirit in sensuous form and passes over from the poetry of the imagination to the prose of thought.

This we may take to be the articulated totality of the particular arts: the external art of architecture, the objective art of sculpture, and the subjective art of painting, music, and poetry. Of course many other classifications have been attempted, since the work of art presents such a wealth of aspects that, as has often happened, now this one and now that can be made the basis of classification. Consider, for example, the sensuous material. In that case architecture is the crystallization, sculpture the organic configuration, of matter in its sensuous and spatial totality; painting is the coloured surface and line; while, in music, space as such passes over into the inherently filled point of time; until, finally, in poetry the external material is altogether degraded as worthless. Alternatively, these differences have been considered in their totally abstract aspect of space and time. But such abstract characteristics of the work of art may of course, like its material, be consistently pursued in their special features, but they cannot be carried through as the final basis of classification, because any such aspect derives its origin from a higher principle and therefore has to be subordinate thereto.

As this higher principle we have found the art-forms of the symbolical, the classical, and the romantic, which are themselves the universal moments of the Idea of beauty.

The concrete form of their relation to the individual arts is of such a kind that the several arts constitute the real existence of the art-forms. *Symbolic art* attains its most appropriate actuality and greatest application in *architecture*, where it holds sway in accordance with its whole conception and is not yet degraded to be the inorganic nature, as it were, dealt with by another art. For the *classical form*, on the other hand, *sculpture* is its unqualified realization, while it takes architecture only as something surrounding it, and it cannot yet develop painting and music as absolute forms for its content. Finally, the *romantic* art-form masters painting and music, and poetic representation likewise, as modes of expression in a way that is substantive and unqualified. But poetry is adequate to all forms of the beautiful and extends over all of them, because its proper element is beautiful imagination, and imagination is indispensable for every beautiful production, no matter to what form of art it belongs.

Now, therefore, what the particular arts realize in individual works of art is, according to the Concept of art, only the universal forms of the self-unfolding Idea of beauty. It is as the external actualization of this Idea that the wide Pantheon of art is rising. Its architect and builder is the self-comprehending spirit of beauty, but to complete it will need the history of the world in its development through thousands of years.

Translated by T.M. Knox

Notes

1 In Baumgarten's *Aesthetica*, 1750. [*Editor*: all notes are by the translator.]
2 This is obscure. Bosanquet, in his translation of Hegel's Introduction (London, 1905), p. 39, suggests an allusion to 'born of water and the spirit', but this must be wrong. Hegel means that we have beauty originated by man's mind and also what is reproduced by his mind in his natural world.
3 i.e. assume that it has been demonstrated.
4 i.e. the art expressive of one world-view differs from that which expresses another: Greek art as a whole differs from Christian art as a whole. The sequence of different religions gives rise to a sequence of different art-forms.
5 An unknown block of stone may symbolize the Divine, but it does not represent it. Its natural shape has no connection with the Divine and is therefore external to it and not an embodiment of it. When shaping begins, the shapes produced are symbols, perhaps, but in themselves are fantastic and monstrous.
6 Bosanquet (Introduction, p. 185) seems to be right in suggesting that 'original Concept' means 'God', and that he *invented* man as an expression of spirit; art *finds* him as appropriate to express the individual spirit. Hegel is fond of the play on words between *erfinden* (invent) and *finden* (find).
7 Bosanquet points out that the idea is abstract because it represents the soul as independent of an appropriate body – the human soul as capable of existing in a beast's body (ibid., p. 186).
8 In other words, thought is 'inwardness' in the sense that thoughts are not outside one another in the way that the parts of a body are. This is why the spirit cannot find an adequate embodiment in things but only in thoughts, or at least only in the inner life.
9 The forms of art are the symbolic, classical, and romantic. The kinds of art are sculpture, painting, etc. There is a sense in which one kind of art (e.g. sculpture) is the adequate mode in which one form of art (e.g. the classical) is actualized. But no form of art is wholly actualized in one kind of art alone; it requires the others, even if they take a subordinate place. Thus while one kind of art may belong *par excellence* to one form of art, it also appears to some extent in the other forms and may be said to present them all. This whole section on the kinds of art is not easily intelligible except in the light of Hegel's full discussion in Part III of these lectures.

10 i.e. shape taken simply as an object occupying space (Bosanquet, Introduction, p. 199).
11 The unity of the members of a church is not visible, but exists in their common belief and in the recognition of their community (ibid., p. 200).
12 An obvious reference to Goethe's theory of colour, one of Hegel's favourite topics.
13 For this section on sound and music, see Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*, i.e. *Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, §§ 300–02. Two English translations are available: A.V. Miller, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970, pp. 136–47, and M.J. Petry, London: Allen and Unwin, 1970, vol. 2, pp. 69–82.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by G.W.F. Hegel in English

Phenomenology of Mind (1807), trans. J.B. Baillie, New York: Harper and Row, 1967.
Phenomenology of Spirit (1807), trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
Lectures on Natural Right and Political Science (1817–18), trans. J.M. Stewart and P.C. Hodgson, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
Elements of the Philosophy of Right (1821), trans. H.B. Nisbet, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Outlines of the Philosophy of Right (1821), trans. T.M. Knox and S. Houlgate, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. Introduction: Reason in History (1820s), trans. H.B. Nisbet, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy (1820s), trans. T.M. Knox and A.V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–6, Vol. 1: Introduction and Oriental Philosophy (1825–26), trans. R.F. Brown, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–6, Vol. 2: Greek Philosophy (1825–26), trans. R.F. Brown, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–6, Vol. 3: Medieval and Modern Philosophy (1825–26), trans. R.F. Brown, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: One-Volume Edition, The Lectures of 1827 (1827), ed. P.C. Hodgson, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
Logic. Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830), trans. W. Wallace, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
Encyclopaedia Logic (1830), trans. T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991.
Philosophy of Nature. Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830), trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.
Philosophy of Mind. Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830), trans. W. Wallace, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
Science of Logic (1812–16, revised 1831), trans. A.V. Miller, London: Allen and Unwin, 1969.
Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art (1835, 1842) vols. 1 and 2, trans. T.M. Knox, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics (1835, 1842), trans. B. Bosanquet, London: Penguin, 1993.
Hegel: The Letters, trans. C. Butler and C. Seiler, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
The Hegel Reader, ed. S. Houlgate, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

Further reading

For introductions to Hegel's philosophy, see Beiser (2005), Rockmore (1993), and Singer (2001). Anthologies of essays covering different aspects of Hegel's thought are given by Beiser (1993, 2008) and Inwood (1985). Short introductions to Hegel's aesthetics are provided by Bowie (2003), Houlgate (2009), Inwood (1985, 1993), and Wicks (1993). For longer, more detailed accounts of his aesthetics, see Bungay (1984), Etter (2006), Kaminsky (1962), Magnus (2001), and Wicks (1994), as well as the anthologies of essays compiled by Houlgate (2007), Maker (2000), and Steinkraus and Schmitz (1980).

Comparisons between Hegel's and Kant's aesthetics can be found in Ameriks (2002), Gardiner (1987), Guyer (1990), D'Oro (1996), and Pillow (2000). The complex relation between art and philosophy in Hegel's system is

explored by Etter (2006), Hendrix (2005), Pippin (2008), Taft (1987), Taminiaux (1999), Tsakiridou (1991), and William (1986). Specific attention is paid to the 'death of art' thesis by Carter (1993), Gaiger (2000), Geulen (2006), Harries (1974), Harris (1984), Hilmer (1998), and Houlgate (1997). Just how Hegel's aesthetics stands in relation to the history of art is examined by Gaiger (2006), Moran (1981), Speight (2008), Winfield (1995), and Wyss (1999). Studies paying attention to the way Hegel refers to specific works or kinds of art include Cooper (1998), Etter (1999), Fowkes (1981), Gaiger (2006), Henrich (1979, 1985), Houlgate (2000), Johnson (1991), Pippin (2002), Rutter (2010), Westphal (1997), and Winfield (1995, 1996). For poststructuralist engagement with Hegel, see Barnett (1998), Derrida (1986), and de Man (1982).

K. Ameriks, 'Hegel's aesthetics: new perspectives on its response to Kant and romanticism', *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 2002, vol. 45, pp. 72–92.
S. Barnett (ed.), *Hegel after Derrida*, London: Routledge, 1998.
F.C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
———, *Hegel*, New York: Routledge, 2005.
———, (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
A. Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003. 2nd edition.
S. Bungay, *Beauty and Truth: A Study of Hegel's Aesthetics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.
C. Carter, 'A re-examination of the "death of art" interpretation of Hegel's aesthetics', in L.S. Stepelevich (ed.), *Selected Essays on G.W.F. Hegel*, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1993, pp. 11–27.
H. Cooper, 'Mondrian, Hegel, Boogie', *October*, 1998, vol. 84, pp. 118–42.
J. Derrida, *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. and Richard Rand, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.
B.K. Etter, 'Beauty, ornament, and style: the problem of classical architecture in Hegel's aesthetics', *The Owl of Minerva*, 1999, vol. 30, pp. 211–35.
———, *Between Transcendence and Historicism: The Ethical Nature of the Arts in Hegelian Aesthetics*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.
W. Fowkes, *A Hegelian Account of Contemporary Art*, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981.
J. Gaiger, 'Art as made and sensuous: Hegel, Danto and the "end of art"', *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 2000, vol. 41, pp. 104–19.
———, 'Catching up with history: Hegel and abstract painting', in K. Deligiorgi (ed.), *Hegel: New Directions*, Chesham: Acumen, 2006, pp. 159–76.
P. Gardiner, 'Kant and Hegel on aesthetics', in S. Priest (ed.), *Hegel's Critique of Kant*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, pp. 161–71.
E. Geulen, *The End of Art: Readings in a Rumor after Hegel*, trans. J. McFarland, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.
P. Guyer, 'Hegel on Kant's aesthetics: necessity and contingency in beauty and art', in H.-F. Fulda and R.-P. Horstmann (eds), *Hegel und die 'Kritik der Urteilskraft'*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990, pp. 81–99.
K. Harries, 'Hegel on the future of art', *The Review of Metaphysics*, 1974, vol. 27, pp. 677–96.
H.S. Harris, 'The resurrection of art', *The Owl of Minerva*, 1984, vol. 16, pp. 5–20.
J.S. Hendrix, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Spirit: From Plotinus to Schelling and Hegel*, New York: Peter Lang, 2005.
D. Henrich, 'Art and philosophy of art today: reflections with reference to Hegel', trans. D.H. Wilson *et al.*, in R.E. Amacher and V. Lange (eds), *New Perspectives in German Literary Criticism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, pp. 107–33.
———, 'The contemporary relevance of Hegel's aesthetics', in M. Inwood (ed.), *Hegel*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 199–207.
B. Hilmer, 'Being Hegelian after Danto', *History and Theory*, 1998, vol. 37, pp. 71–86.
S. Houlgate, 'Hegel and the "end" of art', *The Owl of Minerva*, 1997, vol. 29, pp. 1–21.
———, 'Hegel and the art of painting', in W. Maker (ed.), *Hegel and Aesthetics*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000, pp. 61–82.
———, (ed.), *Hegel and the Arts*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007.
———, 'Hegel's aesthetics', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2009. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel-aesthetics/ (accessed 3 April 2010).
M. Inwood (ed.), *Hegel*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

———, 'Introduction to Hegel's aesthetics', in G.W.F. Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (1835, 1842), trans. B. Bosanquet, London: Penguin, 1993, pp. ix–xxxvi.
J. Johnson, 'Music in Hegel's aesthetics: a re-evaluation', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 1991, vol. 31, pp. 152–62.
J. Kaminsky, *Hegel on Art: An Interpretation of Hegel's Aesthetics*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1962.
K.D. Magnus, *Hegel and the Symbolic Mediation of Spirit*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.
W. Maker (ed.), *Hegel and Aesthetics*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.
P. de Man, 'Sign and symbol in Hegel's aesthetics', *Critical Inquiry*, 1982, vol. 8, pp. 761–75.
M. Moran, 'On the continuing significance of Hegel's aesthetics', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 1981, vol. 21, pp. 214–39.
G. D'Oro, 'Beauties of nature and beauties of art: on Kant and Hegel's aesthetics', *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 1996, vol. 33, pp. 70–86.
K. Pillow, *Sublime Understanding: Aesthetic Reflection in Kant and Hegel*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000.
R.B. Pippin, 'What was abstract art? (From the point of view of Hegel)', *Critical Inquiry*, 2002, vol. 29, pp. 1–24.
———, 'The absence of aesthetics in Hegel's aesthetics', in F.C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 394–418.
T. Rockmore, *Before and After Hegel: A Historical Introduction to Hegel's Thought*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993.
B. Rutter, *Hegel on the Modern Arts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
P. Singer, *Hegel: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
A. Speight, 'Hegel and aesthetics: the practice and "pastness" of art', in F.C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 378–93.
W. Steinkraus and K. Schmitz (eds), *Art and Logic in Hegel's Philosophy*, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980.
R. Taft, 'Art and philosophy in the early development of Hegel's system', *The Owl of Minerva*, 1987, vol. 18, pp. 145–62.
J. Taminiaux, 'The Hegelian legacy in Heidegger's overcoming of aesthetics', in R. Comay and J. McCumber (eds), *Endings: Questions of Memory in Hegel and Heidegger*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999, pp. 114–38.
C.A. Tsakiridou, '*Darstellung*: reflections on art, logic, and system in Hegel', *The Owl of Minerva*, 1991, vol. 23, pp. 15–28.
K. Westphal, 'Hegel, formalism, and Robert Turner's ceramic art', *Jahrbuch für Hegelforschung*, 1997, vol. 3, pp. 259–83.
R. Wicks, 'Hegel's aesthetics: an overview', in F.C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 348–77.
———, *Hegel's Theory of Aesthetic Judgment*, New York: Peter Lang, 1994.
D. William, *Art and the Absolute: A Study of Hegel's Aesthetics*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986.
R.D. Winfield, 'Hegel, romanticism, and modernity', *The Owl of Minerva*, 1995, vol. 27, pp. 3–18.
———, *Stylistics: Rethinking the Artforms after Hegel*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.
B. Wyss, *Hegel's Art History and the Critique of Modernity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Chapter 3

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

INTRODUCTION

Whereas representation and reality, for Kant and Hegel, are elements whose interaction has to be explained, Nietzsche (1844–1900) takes the decisive step of removing the distinction altogether. Although there are times during his career when he falls back on the model of representations concealing reality, the general direction of his thought is guided by the thesis that *the world is constructed through representation*, that reality and representation are not in fact separate but mutually defining aspects of the same process. This makes Nietzsche a crucial figure in the development of aesthetics. Removing the distinction between appearance and reality means that the sensory material with which we come into immediate contact *is* reality. Art, no longer confined to surface impressions, becomes the process through which we shape the world.

Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) are two key influences. Kant proposes that the mind organizes experience, but his system raises the problem of the thing in itself or noumenon: concepts transform intuitions and thereby determine the way things *appear to us*, but they do not have access to things as they are in themselves *behind appearances*. Much post-Kantian philosophy tries to overcome this divide, and various attempts are made to reconcile or equate the realms of phenomena and noumena. Hegel offers one reply, as we have seen, and Schopenhauer provides another.

What is novel about Schopenhauer's proposal, and the aspect of his thought which feeds most directly into Nietzsche, is the suggestion that perception is, by definition, through its own activity, apprehension of the noumenal. As cognitive beings in the world, he argues, our faculties are already part of that which we are wanting to know. Experience comes to us through our bodies. The body is not just a casing or a means of mobility but that which locates us as sensory, sentient beings in the world. Instead of the binary model of appearance and thing in itself, Schopenhauer introduces the singular notion of the 'will': reality conceived as a dynamic within which our acts and representations are enfolded. An explanation of how subjective experience can be identified with objective reality, he writes,

> could never be found if the investigator himself were nothing more than the purely knowing subject (a winged cherub without a body). But he himself is rooted in that world; and thus he finds himself in it as an *individual*, in other words, his knowledge, which is the conditional supporter of the whole world as representation, is nevertheless given entirely through the medium of a body, and the affections of this body are, as we have shown, the starting-point for the understanding in its perception of this world… To the subject of knowing, who appears as an individual only through his identity with the body, this body is given in two entirely different ways. It is given in

> intelligent perception as representation, as an object among objects, liable to the laws of these objects. But it is also given in quite a different way, namely as what is known immediately to everyone, and is denoted by the word *will*. Every true act of his will is also at once and inevitably a movement of his body; he cannot actually will the act without at the same time being aware that it appears as a movement of the body. The act of will and the action of the body are not two different states objectively known, connected by the bond of causality; they do not stand in the relation of cause and effect, but are one and the same thing, though given in two entirely different ways, first quite directly, and then in perception for the understanding. The action of the body is nothing but the act of will objectified, i.e. translated into perception.[1]

Perhaps the most intriguing feature of this shift in thought is that, on the one hand, we are asked to treat what is normally regarded as separate – conscious experience and reality – as arising out of one thing, the will, and yet, on the other hand, a philosophy of experience, to be coherent or, at least, applicable, needs to be able to explain the fact that experience definitely has a binary nature: it involves counter-pressure; the world resists our expectations. Equating mind and reality solves one problem (Kant's noumenon) but raises another: how we account for the textures and pressures of experience. Both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, in their individual ways, attempt to explain identity and difference through notions of dynamism, tension, and force. After this, the question of how one thing can give rise to two becomes a central concern of twentieth-century phenomenology. The necessity which impels us to divide continuous experience into subjects and objects is examined by Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1927) and, later, the role which binary oppositions play in structuring (and undermining) intention is targeted by deconstruction.

Nietzsche's aim, roughly put, is to bring philosophy 'back to life', to make it 'life-affirming' once again. In his view, philosophy, from Plato, through Christianity, to rationalism, has identified knowledge and virtue with the orderly, sombre, life-denying aspects of existence, at the expense of its more intoxicating, chaotic, dream-like moments. In reply, Nietzsche does not advocate a swing to all-out hedonism but, rather, proposes a model of being based on the interplay between order and chaos. These two principles are represented throughout his writing by the Greek gods Apollo and Dionysus. They are introduced in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872): a return to the pre-Socratic dynamics of Greek theatre made in order to restore the moral and epistemological significance of tragic drama, stripped from it by Plato's idealist metaphysics.[2] The Dionysian principle brings frenzy, celebration, and loss of self, whereas the Apollonian gives shape, form, and 'necessary illusion' to these drives. It is in the arts, Nietzsche claims, that we can see this play being acted out, for the artist has to mediate between inner, chaotic impulse and outer, organized form.

'On Truth and Lie in an Extramoral Sense', written in 1873, a year after *The Birth of Tragedy*, could be regarded as Nietzschean philosophy in tablet form. With impressive clarity, admirable concision, and delightful images, Nietzsche articulates the nihilism that defines his work on aesthetics, epistemology, and morality. Nihilism is the denial of all orthodox values and beliefs and, more specifically, the rejection of the view that values and beliefs derive from or are bestowed upon us by an external, other-worldly source. Religion and metaphysical schemas which identify the possibility of ordered experience with the existence of a supersensible or noumenal realm, e.g. Plato's Forms, Kant's things in themselves, are the principal targets. Nihilism, however, is not an anything-goes pessimism but a drawing-attention-to the responsibilities we have for defining in our own terms what counts as truth and order. Nietzsche's arguments in 'On Truth and Lie' challenge the traditional philosophical model of truth as a relation between concepts and an external, mind-independent world. The notions of 'a concept' and 'reality in itself' are linked. We form concepts or general ideas, he claims, by subtracting all that is particular or distinctive from individuals:

> A word becomes a concept insofar as it simultaneously has to fit countless more or less similar cases – which means, purely and simply, cases which are never equal and thus altogether unequal. Just as it is certain that one leaf is never totally the same as another, so it is certain that the concept 'leaf' is formed by arbitrarily discarding these individual differences and by forgetting the distinguishing aspects. This awakens the idea that, in addition to the leaves, there exists in nature the 'leaf': the original model according to which all the leaves were perhaps woven, sketched, measured, coloured, curled, and painted – but by incompetent hands, so that no specimen has turned out to be a correct, trustworthy, and faithful likeness of the original model.

This original template, this thing in itself, however, is not to be found. It is, Nietzsche asserts, mere anthropomorphism: treating something human or subjective as if it had existence independent of and prior to ourselves. Nature, he avows, 'is acquainted with no forms and no concepts, and likewise with no species, but only with an X which remains inaccessible and indefinable for us'. We delude ourselves into thinking that, because we have a single word for something, there must be a corresponding original essence behind it.

Concepts, Nietzsche announces, rather than being the entities which map out for us the order of things in themselves, are in fact metaphors, the products of our own creativity. Perception cannot involve a correspondence relation between concept and thing because there is no original thing. All there is is a mute, indefinable X which is *transformed* by our worldly, sensory faculties into experience and perception. It is the transformational nature of perception which makes it metaphorical. Just as a metaphor consists of the pairing of unrelated terms, e.g. 'life is a box of chocolates', so perception involves the move from one domain – nerve stimulation – to another – an image or sound – where there is no relation of similarity or correspondence between them. This is not just the point that abstract and everyday phrases have metaphorical, imagistic origins, such as 'grasp the idea', 'shed light on the problem', 'the wing of the building', 'kick-start the economy', but also the much more devastating assertion that what we see, what we hear, what we feel are events that have the qualities they do *not because they have been given to them by an external source* but because they exist as *creative, transformational interactions between our faculties and the wider domain of being* – Nietzsche's indefinable X or Schopenhauer's 'will' – of which our faculties are a part.

In the history of philosophy, aesthetic experience has been maligned for not being reducible to conceptual description or not being readily quantifiable. With Nietzsche, however, it becomes a theory of being: 'a painter without hands who wished to express in song the picture before his mind would, by means of this substitution of spheres, still reveal more about the essence of things than does the empirical world'. Gone is the conventional notion of truth as the 'correct' representation, the one which best corresponds to reality, since knowledge here is no longer understood as a binary relation between representation and object. Instead, perception and understanding are akin to the creation and appreciation of art. In the absence of an external source, value and truth *have to be made;* they become our own creations, and questions of right and wrong become questions of interpretation. However, although the binary distinction between appearance and reality has been removed, a coherent theory of experience, as noted above, still has to account for the 'binary feel' of experience, the counter-pressure the world throws up against consciousness. This, Nietzsche claims, we find in aesthetic, metaphorical transformation, e.g. the expression of a mood in sound or a face in charcoal. It is to these 'leaps' in artistic creativity (from one domain to another) and the demands they impose on interpretation, he urges us, that we should look for our understanding of the tensions and resistances which constitute the individual's experience of the world.

Notes

1 A. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* vol. I (1819), vol. II (1844), trans. E.F.J. Payne, New York: Dover, 1969, I, pp. 99–100.
2 F. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Vintage, 1967.

■ ■ ■

ON TRUTH AND LIE IN AN EXTRAMORAL SENSE[1]

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

1

Once upon a time, in some out of the way corner of that universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of 'world history,' but nevertheless, it was only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths, the star cooled and congealed, and the clever beasts had to die.[2] – One might invent such a fable, and yet he still would not have adequately illustrated how miserable, how shadowy and transient, how aimless and arbitrary the human intellect looks within nature. There were eternities during which it did not exist. And when it is all other with the human intellect, nothing will have happened. For this intellect has no additional mission which would lead it beyond human life. Rather, it is human, and only its possessor and begetter takes it so solemnly – as though the world's axis turned within it. But if we could communicate with the gnat, we would learn that he likewise flies through the air with the same solemnity,[3] that he feels the flying center of the universe within himself. There is nothing so reprehensible and unimportant in nature that it would not immediately swell up like a balloon at the slightest puff of this power of knowing. And just as every porter wants to have an admirer, so even the proudest of men, the philosopher, supposes that he sees on all sides the eyes of the universe telescopically focused upon his action and thought.

It is remarkable that this was brought about by the intellect, which was certainly allotted to these most unfortunate, delicate, and ephemeral beings merely as a device for detaining them a minute within existence. For without this addition they would have every reason to flee this existence as quickly as Lessing's son.[4] The pride connected with knowing and sensing lies like a blinding fog over the eyes and senses of men, thus deceiving them concerning the value of existence. For this pride contains within itself the most flattering estimation of the value of knowing. Deception is the most general effect of such pride, but even its most particular effects contain within themselves something of the same deceitful character.

As a means for the preserving of the individual, the intellect unfolds its principal powers in dissimulation, which is the means by which weaker, less robust individuals preserve themselves – since they have been denied the chance to wage the battle for existence with horns or with the sharp teeth of beasts of prey. This art of dissimulation reaches its peak in man. Deception, flattering, lying, deluding, talking behind the back, putting up a false front, living in borrowed splendor, wearing a mask, hiding behind convention, playing a role for others and for oneself – in short, a continuous fluttering around the *solitary* flame of vanity – is so much the rule and the law among men that there is almost nothing which is less comprehensible than how an honest and

pure drive for truth could have arisen among them. They are deeply immersed in illusions and in dream images; their eyes merely glide over the surface of things and see 'forms.' Their senses nowhere lead to truth; on the contrary, they are content to receive stimuli and, as it were, to engage in a groping game on the backs of things. Moreover, man permits himself to be deceived in his dreams every night of his life.[5] His moral sentiment does not even make an attempt to prevent this, whereas there are supposed to be men who have stopped snoring through sheer will power. What does man actually know about himself? Is he, indeed, ever able to perceive himself completely, as if laid out in a lighted display case? Does nature not conceal most things from him – even concerning his own body – in order to confine and lock him within a proud, deceptive consciousness, aloof from the coils of the bowels, the rapid flow of the blood stream, and the intricate quivering of the fibers! She threw away the key. And woe to that fatal curiosity which might one day have the power to peer out and down through a crack in the chamber of consciousness and then suspect that man is sustained in the indifference of his ignorance by that which is pitiless, greedy, insatiable, and murderous – as if hanging in dreams on the back of a tiger.[6] Given this situation, where in the world could the drive for truth have come from?

Insofar as the individual wants to maintain himself against other individuals, he will under natural circumstances employ the intellect mainly for dissimulation. But at the same time, from boredom and necessity, man wishes to exist socially and with the herd; therefore, he needs to make peace and strives accordingly to banish from his world at least the most flagrant *bellum omni contra omnes*.[7] This peace treaty brings in its wake something which appears to be the first step toward acquiring that puzzling truth drive: to wit, *that* which shall count as 'truth' from now on is established. That is to say, a uniformly valid and binding designation is invented for things, and this legislation of language likewise establishes the first laws of truth. For the contrast between truth and lie arises here for the first time. The liar is a person who uses the valid designations, the words, in order to make something which is unreal appear to be real. He says, for example, 'I am rich,' when the proper designation for his condition would be 'poor.' He misuses fixed conventions by means of arbitrary substitutions or even reversals of names. If he does this in a selfish and moreover harmful manner, society will cease to trust him and will thereby exclude him. What men avoid by excluding the liar is not so much being defrauded as it is being harmed by means of fraud. Thus, even at this stage, what they hate is basically not deception itself, but rather the unpleasant, hated consequences of certain sorts of deception. It is in a similarly restricted sense that man now wants nothing but truth: he desires the pleasant, life-preserving consequences of truth. He is indifferent toward pure knowledge which has no consequences; to ward those truths which are possibly harmful and destructive he is even hostilely inclined. And besides, what about these linguistic conventions themselves? Are they perhaps products of knowledge, that is, of the sense of truth? Are designations congruent with things? Is language the adequate expression of all realities?

It is only by means of forgetfulness that man can ever reach the point of fancying himself to possess a 'truth' of the grade just indicated. If he will not be satisfied with truth in the form of tautology,[8] that is to say, if he will not be content with empty husks, then he will always exchange truths for illusions. What is a word? It is the copy in sound of a nerve stimulus. But the further inference from the nerve stimulus to a cause outside of us is already the result of a false and unjustifiable application of the principle of sufficient reason.[9] If truth alone had been the deciding factor in the genesis of language, and if the standpoint of certainty had been decisive for designations, then how could we still dare to say 'the stone is hard,' as if 'hard' were something otherwise familiar to us, and not merely a totally subjective stimulation! We separate things according to gender, designating the tree as masculine and the plant as feminine. What arbitrary assignments![10] How far this oversteps the canons of certainty! We speak of a 'snake': this designation touches only upon its ability to twist itself and could therefore also fit

a worm.[11] What arbitrary differentiations! What one-sided preferences, first for this, then for that property of a thing! The various languages placed side by side show that with words it is never a question of truth, never a question of adequate expression; otherwise, there would not be so many languages.[12] The 'thing in itself' (which is precisely what the pure truth, apart from any of its consequences, would be) is likewise something quite incomprehensible to the creator of language and something not in the least worth striving for. This creator only designates the relations of things to men, and for expressing these relations he lays hold of the boldest metaphors.[13] To begin with, a nerve stimulus is transferred into an image:[14] first metaphor. The image, in turn, is imitated in a sound: second metaphor. And each time there is a complete overleaping of one sphere, right into the middle of an entirely new and different one. One can imagine a man who is totally deaf and has never had a sensation of sound and music. Perhaps such a person will gaze with astonishment at Chladni's sound figures;[15] perhaps he will discover their causes in the vibrations of the string and will now swear that he must know what men mean by 'sound.' It is this way with all of us concerning language: we believe that we know something about the things themselves when we speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers; and yet we possess nothing but metaphors for things – metaphors which correspond in no way to the original entities.[16] In the same way that the sound appears as a sand figure, so the mysterious X of the thing in itself first appears as a nerve stimulus, then as an image, and finally as a sound. Thus the genesis of language does not proceed logically in any case, and all the material within and with which the man of truth, the scientist, and the philosopher later work and build, if not derived from never-never land,[17] is at least not derived from the essence of things.

In particular, let us further consider the formation of concepts. Every word instantly becomes a concept precisely insofar as it is not supposed to serve as a reminder of the unique and entirely individual original experience to which it owes its origin; but rather, a word becomes a concept insofar as it simultaneously has to fit countless more or less similar cases – which means, purely and simply, cases which are never equal and thus altogether unequal. Every concept arises from the equation of unequal things. Just as it is certain that one leaf is never totally the same as another, so it is certain that the concept 'leaf' is formed by arbitrarily discarding these individual differences and by forgetting the distinguishing aspects. This awakens the idea that, in addition to the leaves, there exists in nature the 'leaf': the original model according to which all the leaves were perhaps woven, sketched, measured, colored, curled, and painted – but by incompetent hands, so that no specimen has turned out to be a correct, trustworthy, and faithful likeness of the original model. We call a person 'honest', and then we ask 'why has he behaved so honestly today?' Our usual answer is, 'on account of his honesty.' Honesty! This in turn means that the leaf is the cause of the leaves. We know nothing whatsoever about an essential quality called 'honesty'; but we do know of countless individualized and consequently unequal actions which we equate by omitting the aspects in which they are unequal and which we now designate as 'honest' actions. Finally we formulate from them a *qualitas occulta*[18] which has the name 'honesty.' We obtain the concept, as we do the form, by overlooking what is individual and actual; whereas nature is acquainted with no forms and no concepts, and likewise with no species, but only with an X which remains inaccessible and undefinable for us. For even our contrast between individual and species is something anthropomorphic and does not originate in the essence of things; although we should not presume to claim that this contrast does not correspond to the essence of things: that would of course be a dogmatic assertion and, as such, would be just as indemonstrable as its opposite.[19]

What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are

metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins.

We still do not yet know where the drive for truth comes from. For so far we have heard only of the duty which society imposes in order to exist: to be truthful means to employ the usual metaphors. Thus, to express it morally, this is the duty to lie according to a fixed convention, to lie with the herd and in a manner binding upon everyone. Now man of course forgets that this is the way things stand for him. Thus he lies in the manner indicated, unconsciously and in accordance with habits which are centuries old; and precisely *by means of this unconsciousness* and forgetfulness he arrives at his sense of truth. From the sense that one is obliged to designate one thing as 'red,' another as 'cold,' and a third as 'mute,' there arises a moral impulse in regard to truth. The venerability, reliability, and utility of truth is something which a person demonstrates for himself from the contrast with the liar, whom no one trusts and everyone excludes. As a '*rational*' being, he now places his behavior under the control of abstractions. He will no longer tolerate being carried away by sudden impressions, by intuitions. First he universalizes all these impressions into less colorful, cooler concepts, so that he can entrust the guidance of his life and conduct to them. Everything which distinguishes man from the animals depends upon this ability to volatilize perceptual metaphors[20] in a schema, and thus to dissolve an image into a concept. For something is possible in the realm of these schemata which could never be achieved with the vivid first impressions: the construction of a pyramidal order according to castes and degrees, the creation of a new world of laws, privileges, subordinations, and clearly marked boundaries – a new world, one which now confronts that other vivid world of first impressions as more solid, more universal, better known, and more human than the immediately perceived world, and thus as the regulative and imperative world. Whereas each perceptual metaphor is individual and without equals and is therefore able to elude all classification, the great edifice of concepts displays the rigid regularity of a Roman columbarium[21] and exhales in logic that strength and coolness which is characteristic of mathematics. Anyone who has felt this cool breath [of logic] will hardly believe that even the concept – which is as bony, foursquare, and transposable as a die – is nevertheless merely the *residue of a metaphor*, and that the illusion which is involved in the artistic transference of a nerve stimulus into images is, if not the mother, then the grandmother of every single concept.[22] But in this conceptual crap game 'truth' means using every die in the designated manner, counting its spots accurately, fashioning the right categories, and never violating the order of caste and class rank. Just as the Romans and Etruscans cut up the heavens with rigid mathematical lines and confined a god within each of the spaces thereby delimited, as within a *templum*,[23] so every people has a similarly mathematically divided conceptual heaven above themselves and henceforth thinks that truth demands that each conceptual god be sought only within *his own* sphere. Here one may certainly admire man as a mighty genius of construction, who succeeds in piling up an infinitely complicated dome of concepts upon an unstable foundation, and, as it were, on running water. Of course, in order to be supported by such a foundation, his construction must be like one constructed of spiders' webs: delicate enough to be carried along by the waves, strong enough not to be blown apart by every wind. As a genius of construction man raises himself far above the bee in the following way: whereas the bee builds with wax that he gathers from nature, man builds with the far more delicate conceptual material which he first has to manufacture from himself. In this he is greatly to be admired, but not on account of his drive for truth or for pure knowledge of things. When someone hides something behind a bush and looks for it again in the same place and finds it there as well, there is not much to praise in such seeking and finding. Yet this is how matters stand regarding seeking and finding 'truth' within the realm of reason. If I make up the definition of a mammal, and then, after inspecting a camel, declare 'look, a mammal,' I have indeed brought a truth to light in this way, but it is a truth of limited value. That is to say, it is a thoroughly anthropomorphic truth which contains not a single point which would be 'true in itself' or really and universally valid apart from man. At bottom, what the investigator of such

truths is seeking is only the metamorphosis of the world into man. He strives to understand the world as something analogous to man, and at best he achieves by his struggles the feeling of assimilation. Similar to the way in which astrologers considered the stars to be in man's service and connected with his happiness and sorrow, such an investigator considers the entire universe in connection with man:[24] the entire universe as the infinitely fractured echo of one original sound – man; the entire universe as the infinitely multiplied copy of one original picture – man. His method is to treat man as the measure of all things, but in doing so he again proceeds from the error of believing that he has these things [which he intends to measure] immediately before him as mere objects. He forgets that the original perceptual metaphors are metaphors and takes them to be the things themselves.

Only by forgetting this primitive world of metaphor can one live with any repose, security, and consistency:[25] only by means of the petrification and coagulation of a mass of images which originally streamed from the primal faculty of human imagination like a fiery liquid, only in the invincible faith that *this* sun, *this* window, *this* table is a truth in itself, in short, only by forgetting that he himself is an *artistically creating* subject, does man live with any repose, security, and consistency. If but for an instant he could escape from the prison walls of this faith, his 'self consciousness' would be immediately destroyed. It is even a difficult thing for him to admit to himself that the insect or the bird perceives an entirely different world from the one that man does, and that the question of which of these perceptions of the world is the more correct one is quite meaningless, for this would have to have been decided previously in accordance with the criterion of the *correct perception*, which means, in accordance with a criterion which is *not available*. But in any case it seems to me that 'the correct perception' – which would mean 'the adequate expression of an object in the subject' – is a contradictory impossibility.[26] For between two absolutely different spheres, as between subject and object, there is no causality, no correctness, and no expression; there is, at most, an *aesthetic* relation:[27] I mean, a suggestive transference, a stammering translation into a completely foreign tongue – for which there is required, in any case, a freely inventive intermediate sphere and mediating force. 'Appearance' is a word that contains many temptations, which is why I avoid it as much as possible. For it is not true that the essence of things 'appears' in the empirical world. A painter without hands who wished to express in song the picture before his mind would, by means of this substitution of spheres, still reveal more about the essence of things than does the empirical world. Even the relationship of a nerve stimulus to the generated image is not a necessary one. But when the same image has been generated millions of times and has been handed down for many generations and finally appears on the same occasion every time for all mankind, then it acquires at last the same meaning for men it would have if it were the sole necessary image and if the relationship of the original nerve stimulus to the generated image were a strictly causal one. In the same manner, an eternally repeated dream would certainly be felt and judged to be reality. But the hardening and congealing of a metaphor guarantees absolutely nothing concerning its necessity and exclusive justification.

Every person who is familiar with such considerations has no doubt felt a deep mistrust of all idealism of this sort: just as often as he has quite clearly convinced himself of the eternal consistency, omnipresence, and infallibility of the laws of nature. He has concluded that so far as we can penetrate here – from the telescopic heights to the microscopic depths – everything is secure, complete, infinite, regular, and without any gaps. Science will be able to dig successfully in this shaft forever, and all the things that are discovered will harmonize with and not contradict each other. How little does this resemble a product of the imagination, for if it were such, there should be some place where the illusion and unreality can be divined. Against this, the following must be said: if each of us had a different kind of sense perception – if we could only perceive things now as a bird, now as a worm, now as a plant, or if one of us saw a stimulus as red, another

as blue, while a third even heard the same stimulus as a sound – then no one would speak of such a regularity of nature, rather, nature would be grasped only as a creation which is subjective in the highest degree. After all, what is a law of nature as such for us? We are not acquainted with it in itself, but only with its effects, which means in its relation to other laws of nature – which, in turn, are known to us only as sums of relations. Therefore all these relations always refer again to others and are thoroughly incomprehensible to us in their essence. All that we actually know about these laws of nature is what we ourselves bring to them – time and space, and therefore relationships of succession and number. But everything marvelous about the laws of nature, everything that quite astonishes us therein and seems to demand our explanation, everything that might lead us to distrust idealism: all this is completely and solely contained within the mathematical strictness and inviolability of our representations of time and space. But we produce these representations in and from ourselves with the same necessity with which the spider spins. If we are forced to comprehend all things only under these forms, then it ceases to be amazing that in all things we actually comprehend nothing but these forms. For they must all bear within themselves the laws of number, and it is precisely number which is most astonishing in things.[28] All that conformity to law, which impresses us so much in the movement of the stars and in chemical processes, coincides at bottom with those properties which we bring to things. Thus it is we who impress ourselves in this way. In conjunction with this it of course follows that the artistic process of metaphor formation with which every sensation begins in us already presupposes these forms and thus occurs within them. The only way in which the possibility of subsequently constructing a new conceptual edifice from metaphors themselves can be explained is by the firm persistence of these original forms. That is to say, this conceptual edifice is an imitation of temporal, spatial, and numerical relationships in the domain of metaphor.[29]

2

We have seen how it is originally *language* which works on the construction of concepts, a labor taken over in later ages by *science*.[30] Just as the bee simultaneously constructs cells and fills them with honey, so science works unceasingly on this great columbarium of concepts, the graveyard of perceptions. It is always building new, higher stories and shoring up, cleaning, and renovating the old cells; above all, it takes pains to fill up this monstrously towering framework and to arrange therein the entire empirical world, which is to say, the anthropomorphic world. Whereas the man of action binds his life to reason and its concepts so that he will not be swept away and lost, the scientific investigator builds his hut right next to the tower of science so that he will be able to work on it and to find shelter for himself beneath those bulwarks which presently exist. And he requires shelter, for there are frightful powers which continuously break in upon him, powers which oppose scientific 'truth' with completely different kinds of 'truths' which bear on their shields the most varied sorts of emblems.

The drive toward the formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive, which one cannot for a single instant dispense with in thought, for one would thereby dispense with man himself. This drive is not truly vanquished and scarcely subdued by the fact that a regular and rigid new world is constructed as its prison from its own ephemeral products, the concepts. It seeks a new realm and another channel for its activity, and it finds this in *myth* and in *art* generally. This drive continually confuses the conceptual categories and cells by bringing forward new transferences, metaphors, and metonymies. It continually manifests an ardent desire to refashion the world which presents itself to waking man, so that it will be as colorful, irregular, lacking in results and coherence, charming, and eternally new as the world of dreams. Indeed, it is only by means of the rigid and regular web of concepts that the waking man clearly sees that he is awake; and it is precisely because of this that he

sometimes thinks that he must be dreaming when this web of concepts is torn by art. Pascal is right in maintaining that if the same dream came to us every night we would be just as occupied with it as we are with the things that we see every day. 'If a workman were sure to dream for twelve straight hours every night that he was king,' said Pascal, 'I believe that he would be just as happy as a king who dreamt for twelve hours every night that he was a workman.'[31] In fact, because of the way that myth takes it for granted that miracles are always happening, the waking life of a mythically inspired people – the ancient Greeks, for instance – more closely resembles a dream than it does the waking world of a scientifically disenchanted thinker. When every tree can suddenly speak as a nymph, when a god in the shape of a bull can drag away maidens, when even the goddess Athena herself is suddenly seen in the company of Peisistratus driving through the market place of Athens with a beautiful team of horses[32] – and this is what the honest Athenian believed – then, as in a dream, anything is possible at each moment, and all of nature swarms around man as if it were nothing but a masquerade of the gods, who were merely amusing themselves by deceiving men in all these shapes.

But man has an invincible inclination to allow himself to be deceived and is, as it were, enchanted with happiness when the rhapsodist tells him epic fables as if they were true, or when the actor in the theater acts more royally than any real king. So long as it is able to deceive without *injuring*, that master of deception, the intellect, is free; it is released from its former slavery and celebrates its Saturnalia. It is never more luxuriant, richer, prouder, more clever and more daring. With creative pleasure it throws metaphors into confusion and displaces the boundary stones of abstractions, so that, for example, it designates the stream as 'the moving path which carries man where he would otherwise walk.' The intellect has now thrown the token of bondage from itself. At other times it endeavors, with gloomy officiousness, to show the way and to demonstrate the tools to a poor individual who covets existence; it is like a servant who goes in search of booty and prey for his master. But now it has become the master and it dares to wipe from its face the expression of indigence. In comparison with its previous conduct, everything that it now does bears the mark of dissimulation,[33] just as that previous conduct did of distortion.[34] The free intellect copies human life, but it considers this life to be something good and seems to be quite satisfied with it. That immense framework and planking of concepts to which the needy man clings his whole life long in order to preserve himself is nothing but a scaffolding and toy for the most audacious feats of the liberated intellect. And when it smashes this framework to pieces, throws it into confusion, and puts it back together in an ironic fashion, pairing the most alien things and separating the closest, it is demonstrating that it has no need of these makeshifts of indigence and that it will now be guided by intuitions rather than by concepts. There is no regular path which leads from these intuitions into the land of ghostly schemata, the land of abstractions. There exists no word for these intuitions; when man sees them he grows dumb, or else he speaks only in forbidden metaphors and in unheard-of combinations of concepts. He does this so that by shattering and mocking the old conceptual barriers he may at least correspond creatively to the impression of the powerful present intuition.

There are ages in which the rational man and the intuitive man stand side by side, the one in fear of intuition, the other with scorn for abstraction. The latter is just as irrational as the former is inartistic. They both desire to rule over life: the former, by knowing how to meet his principal needs by means of foresight, prudence, and regularity; the latter, by disregarding these needs and, as an 'overjoyed hero,' counting as real only that life which has been disguised as illusion and beauty. Whenever, as was perhaps the case in ancient Greece, the intuitive man handles his weapons more authoritatively and victoriously than his opponent, then, under favorable circumstances, a culture can take shape and art's mastery over life can be established. All the manifestations of such a life will be accompanied by this dissimulation, this disavowal of indigence, this glitter of metaphorical intuitions, and, in general, this immediacy of deception: neither the house, nor the gait, nor the clothes, nor the clay jugs give evidence of

having been invented because of a pressing need. It seems as if they were all intended to express an exalted happiness, an Olympian cloudlessness, and, as it were, a playing with seriousness. The man who is guided by concepts and abstractions only succeeds by such means in warding off misfortune, without ever gaining any happiness for himself from these abstractions. And while he aims for the greatest possible freedom from pain, the intuitive man, standing in the midst of a culture, already reaps from his intuition a harvest of continually inflowing illumination, cheer, and redemption – in addition to obtaining a defense against misfortune. To be sure, he suffers more intensely, *when* he suffers; he even suffers more frequently, since he does not understand how to learn from experience and keeps falling over and over again into the same ditch. He is then just as irrational in sorrow as he is in happiness: he cries aloud and will not be consoled. How differently the stoical man who learns from experience and governs himself by concepts is affected by the same misfortunes! This man, who at other times seeks nothing but sincerity, truth, freedom from deception, and protection against ensnaring surprise attacks, now executes a masterpiece of deception: he executes his masterpiece of deception in misfortune, as the other type of man executes his in times of happiness. He wears no quivering and changeable human face, but, as it were, a mask with dignified, symmetrical features. He does not cry; he does not even alter his voice. When a real storm cloud thunders above him, he wraps himself in his cloak, and with slow steps he walks from beneath it.

Translated by Daniel Breazeale

Notes

1 [*Editor*: translator Daniel Breazeale's preferred rendering of *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne* is 'On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense'. He notes that 'On Truth and Lie in the Extramoral Sense' might be 'a more literal, though less English, translation' (*Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s*, ed. D. Breazeale, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1990, p. 79, n. 1). I have opted for a modified version of the latter. All subsequent footnotes in the extract are by the translator.]

2 Cf. the very similar passage in the antepenultimate paragraph of 'On the pathos of truth' in *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s*, pp. 61-8.

3 *Pathos*.

4 A reference to the offspring of Lessing and Eva König, who died on the day of his birth.

5 Cf. 'The philosopher. Reflections on the struggle between art and knowledge', in *Philosophy and Truth*, §70.

6 Cf. the very similar passage in the penultimate paragraph of 'On the pathos of truth'.

7 'War of each against all.'

8 See 'The philosopher', §150.

9 Note that Nietzsche is here engaged in an implicit critique of Schopenhauer, who had been guilty of precisely this misapplication of the principle of sufficient reason in his first book, *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. It is quite wrong to think that Nietzsche was ever wholly uncritical of Schopenhauer's philosophy (see, for example, the little essay, *Kritik der Schopenhauerischen Philosophie* from 1867, in *Nietzsche's Gesammelte Werke (Musarionausgabe)*, Munich, Musarion, 1920–1929, vol. 1, pp. 392–401).

10 *Welche willkürlichen Übertragungen*. The specific sense of this passage depends upon the fact that all ordinary nouns in the German language are assigned a gender: the tree is *der Baum*; the plant is *die Pflanze*. This assignment of an original sexual property to all things is the 'transference' in question.

11 This passage depends upon the etymological relation between the German words *Schlange* (snake) and *schlingen* (to wind or twist), both of which are related to the Old High German *slango*.

12 What Nietzsche is rejecting here is the theory that there is a sort of 'naturally appropriate' connection between certain words (or sounds) and things. Such a theory is defended by Socrates in Plato's *Cratylus*.
13 On the significance of 'metaphor' (which is closely related to *Übertragung*) for Nietzsche's theories of language and knowledge, see D. Breazeale, 'Introduction', *Philosophy and Truth*, pp. xiii-xlix.
14 *Ein Nervenreiz, zuerst übertragen in ein Bild*. The 'image' in this case is the visual image, what we 'see.' Regarding the term *Bild*, see 'The philosopher', n.2.
15 See 'The philosopher', n.55.
16 *Wesenheiten*.
17 *Wolkenkukuksheim*: literally, 'cloud-cuckoo-land.'
18 'Occult quality.'
19 Nietzsche criticizes Kant on just this score in 'The philosopher', §84.
20 *die anschaulichen Metaphern*. Regarding the translation of *Anschauung*, see 'The philosopher', n. 82. The adjective *anschaulich* has the additional sense of 'vivid' – as in the next sentence ('vivid first impressions').
21 A columbarium is a vault with niches for funeral urns containing the ashes of cremated bodies.
22 I.e. concepts are derived from images, which are, in turn, derived from nerve stimuli.
23 A delimited space restricted to a particular purpose, especially a religiously sanctified area.
24 Cf. 'The philosopher', §§105, 151.
25 See 'The philosopher', n. 68.
26 *ein widerspruchsvolles Unding*. See 'The philosopher', n. 95.
27 *Ein ästhetisches Verhalten*. A more literal translation of *Verhalten* is 'behavior,' 'attitude,' or perhaps 'disposition.'
28 Regarding the special epistemological significance which Nietzsche attached to number and numerical relations, see 'The philosopher', n. 46.
29 This is where section 2 of the fair copy made by von Gersdorff ends. But according to Schlechta (in Karl Schlechta and Anni Anders, *Friedrich Nietzsche. Von den verborgenen Anfangen seines Philosophierens*, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstadt, Frommann, 1962, pp. 14–15). Nietzsche's preliminary version continued as follows:

> Empty space and empty time are ideas which are possible at any time. Every concept, thus an empty metaphor, is only an imitation of these first ideas: space, time, and causality. Afterwards, the original imaginative act of transference into images: the first provides the matter, the second the qualities which we believe in. Comparison to music. How can one speak of it?

30 *Wissenschaft*. See 'The philosopher', n. 14.
31 *Pensées*, number 386. Actually, Pascal says that the workman would be 'almost as happy' as the king in this case!
32 According to the story told by Herodotus (*Histories* I, 60) the tyrant Peisistratus adopted the following ruse to secure his popular acceptance upon his return from exile: he entered Athens in a chariot accompanied by a woman named Phye who was dressed in the costume of Athena. Thus the people were supposed to have been convinced that it was the goddess herself who was conducting the tyrant back to the Acropolis.
33 *Verstellung*.
34 *Verzerrung*.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Friedrich Nietzsche in English

Nietzsche: Writings from the Early Notebooks, eds R. Geuss and A. Nehamas, trans. L. Löb, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s, ed. D. Breazeale, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1990.
The Birth of Tragedy (1872), trans. W. Kaufmann, New York: Random House, 1967.

The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings (1872), eds R. Geuss and R. Speirs, trans. R. Speirs, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks (c. 1873), trans. M. Cowan, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1962.
Untimely Meditations (1873–76), trans. R.J. Hollingdale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
Human, All Too Human (1878), trans. M. Faber with S. Lehmann, London: Penguin, 1994.
Human, All Too Human (1878), trans. R.J. Hollingdale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality (1881), trans. R.J. Hollingdale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
The Gay Science (1882), trans. W. Kaufmann, New York: Random House, 1974.
The Gay Science (1882), trans. J. Nauckhoff and A. Del Caro, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1883–92), trans. R.J. Hollingdale, London: Penguin, 1969.
Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1883–92), trans. A. Del Caro, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
Beyond Good and Evil (1886), trans. W. Kaufmann, New York: Random House, 1966.
Beyond Good and Evil (1886), trans. R.J. Hollingdale, London: Penguin, 1973.
Beyond Good and Evil (1886), trans. J. Norman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
On the Genealogy of Morals (1887), trans. W. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, New York: Random House, 1967.
On the Genealogy of Morality and Other Writings (1887), trans. C. Diethe, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
The Antichrist (1888) (with *Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*), eds and trans. A. Ridley and J. Norman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
The Case of Wagner (1888) (with *The Birth of Tragedy*), trans. W. Kaufmann, New York: Random House, 1967.
Ecce Homo (1888), trans. W. Kaufmann, New York: Random House, 1967.
Nietzsche contra Wagner (1988), trans. W. Kaufmann, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, New York: Viking Press, 1968.
Twilight of the Idols (1888), trans. R.J. Hollingdale, London: Penguin, 1969.
The Will to Power (from the *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, edited by Nietzsche's sister, E. Förster-Nietzsche), trans. W. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, New York: Random House, 1968.
Nietzsche: Writings from the Late Notebooks, ed. R. Bittner, trans. K. Sturge, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
The Portable Nietzsche, ed. and trans. W. Kaufmann, New York: Viking, 1976.
A Nietzsche Reader, ed. and trans. R.J. Hollingdale, London: Penguin, 1977.
The Nietzsche Reader, ed. K. Ansell Pearson, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.

Further reading

For introductions to Nietzsche, see Danto (1965), Hollingdale (1973), and Schacht (1983). Anthologies of essays on different aspects of Nietzsche's thought are given by Magnus and Higgins (1996), Richardson and Leiter (2001), and Sedgwick (1995). His relationship with philosophy is considered by Clark (1990), Kaufmann (1950), Richardson (1996), Small (2001, 2010), and Stauffer and Bergo (2008). His philosophy of art is explored by Babich (1989), Kemal *et al.* (1998), Liebert (2004), Nehamas (1985), Rampley (1999), Ridley (2007), Vandenabeele (2003), and Young (1992), with the anthology prepared by Magnus *et al.* (1993) focusing on the relationship between philosophy and literature.

Nietzsche is subject to critical reading and appropriation by some of the twentieth century's key philosophers, including Bataille (1992), Deleuze (1983), Derrida (1979), Heidegger (1979, 1982, 1984, 1986), Irigaray (1991), Kofman (1993), and Simmel (1991). Interpretation and appropriation in his thought are explored by Allison (1985, 2000), Bloom (1987), Cazeaux (2007), Davey (1986), Koelb (1990), Pecora (1991), Perry (1993), Schrift (1990), and Solomon and Higgins (1998). Feminist readings of Nietzsche are given by Burgard (1994), Oliver (1995), and Oliver and Pearsall (1998). The ethical implications of his philosophy are examined by Lambert (2001), Leiter (2002), Leiter and Sinhababu (2009), Reginster (2006), and Schacht (1994).

D.B. Allison (ed.), *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985.
———, *Reading the New Nietzsche*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.
B.E. Babich, 'From Nietzsche's artist to Heidegger's world: the post-aesthetic perspective', *Man and World*, 1989, vol. 22, 3–23.
G. Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, trans. B. Boone, London: Athlone Press, 1992.

H. Bloom (ed.), *Modern Critical Views: Friedrich Nietzsche*, New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987.
P.J. Burgard (ed.), *Nietzsche and the Feminine*, Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1994.
C. Cazeaux, *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy: From Kant to Derrida*, New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 104–32.
M. Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
A.C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher: An Original Study*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.
N. Davey, 'Nietzsche's aesthetics and the question of hermeneutic interpretation', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 1986, vol. 26, pp. 328–44.
G. Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. H. Tomlinson, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
J. Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. B. Harlow, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Vol. I: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. D.F. Krell, New York: Harper and Row, 1979.
———, *Nietzsche, Vol. II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, trans. D.F. Krell, New York: Harper and Row, 1984.
———, *Nietzsche, Vol. III: Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics*, trans. J. Stambaugh and F. Capuzzi, New York: Harper and Row, 1986.
———, *Nietzsche, Vol. IV: Nihilism*, trans. D.F. Krell, New York: Harper and Row, 1982.
R.J. Hollingdale, *Nietzsche*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.
L. Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. G.C. Gill, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
W. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950.
S. Kemal, I. Gaskell, and D.W. Conway (eds), *Nietzsche, Philosophy and the Arts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
C. Koelb (ed.), *Nietzsche as Postmodernist: Essays Pro and Contra*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.
S. Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, ed. and trans. D. Large, London: Athlone Press; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.
L. Lambert, *Nietzsche's Task: An Interpretation of 'Beyond Good and Evil'*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
B. Leiter, *Routledge Guidebook to Nietzsche on Morality*, London: Routledge, 2002.
B. Leiter and N. Sinhababu (eds), *Nietzsche and Morality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
G. Liebert, *Nietzsche and Music*, trans. D. Pellauer and G. Parkes, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
B. Magnus and K.M. Higgins (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
B. Magnus, S. Stewart, and J.-P. Mileur, *Nietzsche's Case: Philosophy as/and Literature*, New York: Routledge, 1993.
A. Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985.
K. Oliver, *Womanizing Nietzsche: Philosophy's Relation to the 'Feminine'*, New York: Routledge, 1995.
K. Oliver and M. Pearsall (eds), *Feminist Interpretations of Friedrich Nietzsche (Re-reading the Canon)*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998.
V.P. Pecora, 'Nietzsche, genealogy, critical theory', *New German Critique*, 1991, vol. 53, pp. 104–30.
P. Perry, 'Deleuze's Nietzsche', *boundary 2*, 1993, vol. 20, pp. 174–91.
M. Rampley, *Nietzsche, Aesthetics and Modernity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
B. Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006.
J. Richardson, *Nietzsche's System*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
J. Richardson and B. Leiter (eds), *Nietzsche*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
A. Ridley, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Nietzsche on Art*, London: Routledge, 2007.
R. Schacht, *Nietzsche*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.
——— (ed.), *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality: Essays on Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
A.S. Schrift, *Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation: Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction*, New York: Routledge, 1990.
P.R. Sedgwick (ed.), *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
G. Simmel, *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*, trans. H. Loiskandle, D. Weinstein, and M. Weinstein, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991.
R. Small, *Nietzsche in Context*, London: Ashgate, 2001.
———, *Time and Becoming in Nietzsche's Thought*, London: Continuum, 2010.

R.C. Solomon and K.M. Higgins (eds), *Reading Nietzsche*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
J. Stauffer and B. Bergo (eds), *Nietzsche and Levinas: After the Death of a Certain God*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
B. Vandenabeele, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and the aesthetically sublime', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 2003, vol. 37, 90–106.
J. Young, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

PART 2

Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

Introduction

PHENOMENOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS ARE DISTINCT but related theories of experience or, more specifically, theories of how words relate to experience. While the former pays greater attention to the nature of lived experience, and the latter concentrates on problems arising from textual interpretation, both deal in a fundamental way with our status as beings whose existence is enabled and determined by particular physical and cultural conditions. Originally defined, hermeneutics is the art of understanding and interpreting historical texts. In the history of hermeneutics, there are, generally speaking, three phases: theological, romantic, and phenomenological. The first two are characterized by the intention to recover the 'true' meaning a text would have had in the age it was written, free from the mediation and distortion that translation and the passage of time bring. Hermeneutics emerges in the sixteenth century at the time of the Reformation with Martin Luther's concern to retrieve the original meaning of classical and biblical writings. Three centuries later, a comparable desire to know the seminal context and significance of a text is manifest in the romanticism of literary theorists, such as Friedrich Ast, Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher, and Wilhelm Dilthey. What distinguishes twentieth-century hermeneutics (represented in this part by Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, and Vattimo) from its earlier forms is the recognition that the hermeneut, as an interpreter of texts, is herself rooted in history. As a result, any interpretation she gives of a text, no matter how 'close' she claims to be to identifying the conditions of its production, will always be mediated by the historically constructed assumptions and expectations which constitute her practice as a hermeneut. It is this appreciation of the necessarily perspectival nature of historical, textual interpretation which makes recent hermeneutic theory phenomenological.

The beginnings of phenomenology are most often identified with the work of the late nineteenth-, early twentieth-century German thinkers Franz Brentano (1838–1917) and Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), but the governing principles, it can be argued, are first evident in Kant. Phenomenology maintains that the categories with which philosophy has divided up experience in the past are not adequate to experience; they break up continuous experience into things, and let that sense of a lived point-of-contact between mind and reality slip away. Thus new perspectives on experience are offered but neither mind nor reality is taken as a foundation. Instead, the question

of what it means to take experience 'on its own terms' is the starting point. Experience, Brentano argues in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874), is necessarily 'intentional', that is to say, it is always object-directed, always experience *of something*.[1] Experience is such that there will always be some content or other of which we are aware, no matter how unprepared we are for describing what is before us, e.g. this road, this tree, this red, this buzzing confusion. From the basic, intentional structure of experience, whereby one thing (experience) can open out to become two things (experience *of* something), phenomenology sets out to redescribe appearances. Husserl is the first to conduct a major phenomenological redescription of phenomena. In his later works – principally *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* (1913, 1952)[2] and *Cartesian Meditations* (1931)[3] – he performs his phenomenological reduction in order to give verbal expression to mental events as they appear to consciousness, independent of an everyday, uncritical commitment to the existence of other people, places, physical objects, causality, etc.

The premise shared by phenomenology and hermeneutics is that experience has a questioning character: experience is not the grasping of a pre-formed content but instead a form of prospection or enquiry; just as a question draws out and determines a range of possible replies, so the manner in which our faculties approach the world shapes how it appears to us. As Brentano shows, experience has as its structure an essential openness which creates a content or an object for itself; this is intentionality. The foundations of this analysis of experience lie with Kant.[4] His transcendental deduction, from the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781, 1787), demonstrates that the conditions of possibility of subjectivity are at one and the same time the conditions of possibility of objectivity.[5] When we perceive or describe or understand something, we don't just receive what's there but, in virtue of the act, bring something new to it and change what's there; it is the active interplay between mind and object which gives experience its textures and meanings. This applies to objects for phenomenology, and to texts for hermeneutics.

Research in these fields is devoted to the perspectives which constitute our outlook on the world and, in particular, to making palpable the way in which these perspectives are active in determining what we take to be real. The aesthetic is particularly significant here since it is a form of experience which tests or exceeds the understanding we have of our cognitive and cultural contact with the world. Traditionally, the aesthetic has either been defined in opposition to thought or has been denied categorical determination altogether. Thus, not only is it an area of enquiry where the application of concepts is an issue but also, precisely because it has been given this marginal or resistant quality, it is a domain which allows us to witness in operation the processes which give shape to experience. Art, for phenomenology and hermeneutics, renders the ground upon which we're standing visible.

Notes

1 F. Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, trans. A.C. Rancurello, D.B. Terrell, and L.L. McAlister, London: Routledge, 1973. Original work published 1874.

2 E. Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book*, trans. F. Kersten, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1983; *Second Book*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989; *Third Book*, trans. T.E. Klein and W.E. Pohl, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980. The *First Book* was originally published in 1913, with the *Second* and *Third Books* posthumously edited and published in 1952.

3 E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. D. Cairns, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950. Original work published 1931.

4 I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan, 1929. The first edition was published in 1781, the second edition in 1787. These are respectively referred to as the 'A' and 'B' editions, with the original Akadamie pagination included in the margin of translations, e.g. A51, B75.

5 Ibid., A84–130, B116–69, pp. 120–75.

Chapter 4

MARTIN HEIDEGGER

INTRODUCTION

Some of the most important connections between phenomenology and hermeneutics occur in the work of Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), a student of Husserl. Heidegger is a central figure in twentieth-century European philosophy, influencing thinkers such as Gaston Bachelard, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-Luc Nancy. However, he was an active member of the National Socialist Party during the 1930s and the Second World War, and this has affected how his philosophy has been received and interpreted.[1]

Heidegger reasserts the Kantian claim that experience is not the reception of sense impressions but a form of prospection or questioning: to have experience is to be in an active state of finding out about the world. In his principal work, *Being and Time* (1927), he asks: what is the meaning of being? What does it mean to have experience, to be located within a world, to be human? The question of being stimulated the metaphysical schemes of Plato and Aristotle but, since then, according to Heidegger, it has been forgotten. The notion of 'being' has become ordinary and universal, applying to anything and everything in existence. However, what is distinctive about human being, Heidegger avers, is that it is a form of being *for which being itself is an issue*:

> Looking at something, understanding and conceiving it, choosing, access to it – all these ways of behaving are constitutive for our inquiry, and therefore are modes of being for those particular entities which we, the inquirers, are ourselves. Thus to work out the question of being adequately, we must make an entity – the inquirer – transparent in its own being. The very asking of this question is an entity's mode of *being*; and as such it gets its essential character from what is inquired about – namely, being. This entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its being, we shall denote by the term '*Dasein*'.[2]

'Dasein' is an everyday, colloquial German word meaning 'being there' or a human's sense of existence. The fact that being is an issue for us is tremendously important for Heidegger's thesis. Something's 'being an issue', Heidegger writes, 'is a constitutive state of Dasein's being' and this shows that Dasein 'in its being, has a relationship towards that being – a relationship which itself is one of being'. We are not just aware of the world, but *aware of the fact* that we are *aware of the world*. '*Understanding of being*,' he asserts, '*is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's being*. Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological.'[3] 'Ontic' is Heidegger's term for the objects and events which feature in experience, and 'ontological' refers to the structure of experience, that is, in Heidegger's idiom, the structure of the ontic. What distinguishes Dasein from other kinds of being in the world is that its character, and its character alone, represents the possibility of there being other kinds of being in the world.

Heidegger is sensitive to the complexities of introducing terminology which avoids the divisions of subject–object and inside–outside metaphysics. In *Being and Time*, he insists that 'subject and object are not the same as Da-sein and world', adding in a footnote: 'Certainly not. So little that even rejecting this by putting them together is fatal.'[4] As Stambaugh notes in her 1996 translation of *Being and Time*, 'it was Heidegger's express wish that in future translations the word Dasein should be hyphenated'.[5] Heidegger's thinking, Stambaugh continues, was that, with hyphenation,

> the reader will be less prone to assume he or she understands it to refer to 'existence' (which is the orthodox translation of *Dasein*) and with that translation surreptitiously bring along all sorts of psychological connotations. It was Heidegger's insight that human being is *uncanny*: we do not know who, or what, that is, although, or perhaps precisely because, we *are* it.[6]

With Stambaugh, the hyphen in Da-sein introduces a sense of the uncanny. Rather than having Da-sein remain as a word which refers straightforwardly to human being as a clearly circumscribed thing – to existence or to the subject – the hyphen maintains the reference to us but at the same time makes it other than us. It emphasizes that human being is distributed in a way that dualistic, Cartesian, subject–object terminology does not easily accommodate: a 'being there', an entity whose *being* is located and extended *in the world*. Despite the claim for the relationship between typography and ontology, this *Reader* will nevertheless adhere to the traditional convention of presenting 'Dasein' as an unhyphenated word, although readers are advised to bear in mind the warnings given here against the word performing a familiar 'existence-' or 'entity-denoting' function.

Heidegger is pursuing the Kantian project of drawing out the conditions of possibility of experience: the structures which have to be at work in and around experience for there to be any experience at all. Experience takes the form of a question, Heidegger argues, in the sense that there always has to be an opening-up of possibilities in advance of experience in order for experience to take place. Just as the kind of question asked influences the answer, he avows, so the way in which we approach reality affects how it appears. In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929), Heidegger shows that experience is made possible by the projection in advance of experience of the concept of an object in general as a horizon of possibility, and this opens up a 'space' in which objects can appear before consciousness. The 'Kant book' (as Heidegger refers to it) develops some of the connections implicit but never realized in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781, 1787) and was written as preparation for the second part of *Being and Time*, but Heidegger never completed the project. The concept of a horizon projected prior to experience raises the question of the source of the projection, but this is one of the complexities involved in developing an ontology which does not take subject or object, or the terms of dualistic philosophy in general, as its foundation. Both Heidegger and Kant are seeking to formulate the structures which allow a world, including human subjectivity within the world, to come into being in the first place.

If the question of being has been forgotten, if being has become ordinary, then we must draw it out and make it prominent again. Phenomenology, Heidegger asserts, is the method of enquiry whereby something is brought out 'into the open'. He defines it as letting 'that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself'.[7] However, this phenomenological disclosure is also hermeneutic, in two senses: (1) because it involves interpretation, and (2) because we are working towards an understanding not just of how things appear to us, but of how things appear *per se*. As Heidegger writes, his enquiry 'becomes a "hermeneutic"' to the extent 'that by uncovering the meaning of being and the basic structures of Dasein in general we may exhibit the horizon for any further ontological study of those entities which do not have the character of Dasein'; in other words, we work out 'the conditions on which the possibility of any

ontological investigation depends'.[8] This is 'hermeneutic' in the (recent) sense of transcending one's subjective standpoint to approach objectivity. It is reminiscent of Kant's attempt to secure objectivity given his investment of the possibility of experience within the subject. We can make the comparison with conversation again: asking a question elicits a response and, although the response is influenced by the phrasing of the question, it nevertheless represents the willingness to approach a shared understanding which is constitutive of all communication.

Heidegger develops a new ontology – the way in which experience and the world are shaped and organized – based on processes of disclosing and concealing, opening and closing. Apart from the times when we are amazed by the extent and complexity of the universe, we ordinarily take the existence of objects for granted; we assume they are simply 'there', waiting for us to perceive or interact with them. The tyranny of the ordinary again. Heidegger is interested in how things come to be for us, how they are bound up with our subjective experience and the meanings, values, and dispositions which experience involves. Our everyday ontology of stable, mind-independent objects, he asserts, presupposes a prior, 'fundamental' ontology whereby things are disclosed or concealed. Before things can exist, the conditions that allow things to come into being, that allow the formation of the environment in which Dasein finds itself, must apply. Heidegger gives the senses as an illustration of disclosure.[9] When we see, we are not passively receiving what is 'out there' in the world. Rather, the optical and neural processes that take place within us open up the world for us in a certain way, that is, they allow us to interpret the world in terms of colour and as something which is *continuously there*. Hearing makes the world available to us in alternative ways, allowing us to be aware of things that are not yet visible, e.g. the person singing next door, and to be aware of things *intermittently*, that is, only when they are making a noise. For the blind, rain behaves like light: raindrops bouncing off different surfaces give texture and depth to an otherwise silent, featureless world.

The concept of disclosure is central to the essay representing Heidegger here, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', first given as a series of lectures in 1935 and 1936. The essay brings together some of the most complex ideas in his philosophy while at the same time trying to make art central to his fundamental ontology. As well as 'disclosure', other key concepts include: truth as *aletheia*, truth as untruth, concealment, the concept of world, and the strife of world and earth. The origin of the work of art is not the artist, nor is it the institution of art. Rather, the origin of art is truth as *aletheia*. The concept is the subject of extensive debate within Heideggerian scholarship. Dasein and *aletheia*, Heidegger asserts, are related 'in terms of the temporality of existence', and fathoming this arrangement is the '*central problematic*' of *Being and Time*.[10] As an initial definition, '*aletheia*' means 'the unconcealedness of beings'. It is a concept of truth distinct from and logically prior to the conventional, Roman notion of truth as *veritas* or 'correspondence with the facts'. For there to be any objects to make up states of affairs to which our statements can correspond, there must be the 'truth' which lets these objects first come to be. To make *aletheia* the origin of the work of art is therefore to make art fundamentally ontological, to make its origin a process which is intrinsic to the organization of the world and Dasein's being in the world. It is to position art as something which is active in shaping human being and its activity in the world.

While there is general agreement that *aletheia* can be translated as 'unconcealment' or 'disclosure', there is disagreement as to what is meant by truth as 'unconcealment' or 'disclosure'. For example, to adapt the title of Sallis's book, there is the suggestion that Heidegger 'doubles truth' by introducing a form of truth as unconcealment which stands as the originary ground of truth as *veritas*, that is, truth as 'correctness' or 'correspondence'.[11] Tugendhat takes Heidegger to be introducing 'a new concept of truth' on the grounds that the conventional notion of truth as correspondence does not include disclosiveness as a principle.[12] The problem here, according to Tugendhat, is that Heidegger's concept

of truth discloses a world but does not provide us with a means of testing any part of it: 'if truth means unconcealment, in the Heideggerian sense, then it follows that an understanding of world in general is opened up but not that it is put to the test'.[13] But these problems only arise for Sallis and Tugendhat, Wrathall maintains, because they interpret truth as unconcealment, as a form of truth distinct from correspondence. Against this, Wrathall argues, unconcealment is in fact positioned by Heidegger as *a condition of the possibility of truth as correspondence*.[14] This effectively moves disclosure from being treated as an alternative form of truth to being a ground for truth as correspondence. In support of this reading, Wrathall argues, is Heidegger's announcement in 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking' that 'to raise the question of *aletheia*, of unconcealment as such, is not the same as raising the question of truth. For this reason, it was immaterial and therefore misleading to call *aletheia*, in the sense of clearing, "truth".'[15] Furthermore, Wrathall asserts, irrespective of this announcement, it is possible to read Heidegger's prior accounts of unconcealment as grounding correspondence in the sense that what is unconcealed is a situation about which a correspondence claim can be made.[16]

While the importance of these uncertainties over truth as correspondence should not be dismissed, it is questions of 'world' and 'the strife between world and earth' that are more to the fore in 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. Art is true, Heidegger claims, in that it lets us see the tension between concealment and disclosure. He calls this the 'strife of world and earth'. 'World' is an ambiguous word. Heidegger in fact identifies four senses of the word in *Being and Time*: (1) the sum total of beings and things in existence; (2) all the possible things which fill up a life, 'for example, when we speak of the "world" of the mathematician, we mean the region of all possible mathematical objects'; (3) similar to (2) but with more emphasis on 'lived reality', that '*in which*' a factical Dasein 'lives', for example, the 'public world of the we or one's "own" and nearest (in the home) surrounding world'; and (4) 'the ontological and existential concept of worldliness' understood as 'the respective structural totality of particular "worlds", [containing] the a priori of worldliness in general'.[17] Meanings (1) and (2) are in common usage but are not intended here. As Heidegger writes, 'the world is not the mere collection of the countable or uncountable, familiar and unfamiliar things that are at hand. But neither is it a merely imagined framework added by our representation to the sum of such given things.' Instead, as he indicates in 'Origin', it is meanings (3) and (4) which are intended:

> The *world worlds*, and is more fully in being than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we believe ourselves to be at home. World is never an object that stands before us and can be seen. World is the ever-nonobjective to which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing and curse keep us transported into Being. Wherever those utterly essential decisions of our history are made, are taken up and abandoned by us, go unrecognized and are rediscovered by new inquiry, there the world worlds.

With meaning (3), according to Krell, '"world" is that already familiar horizon upon which everyday human existence confidently moves'; it is 'the structural whole of significant relationships that Dasein experiences – with tools, things of nature, and other human beings – as being-in-the-world'.[18] The example of the temple from the 'Origin' essay helps to clarify this meaning. 'A building, a Greek temple,' Heidegger declares, 'portrays nothing. It simply stands there in the middle of the rock-cleft valley.' Yet, as a work, it establishes a series of relations between its own material elements, its location on rocky ground, and the lives of the ancient Greeks: 'it fits together and at the same time gathers round itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape and destiny for human being'.

Meaning (4), 'the a priori of worldliness in general', I suggest, is also at work, because we have the enigmatic phrase 'the world worlds'. This phrase, alongside others such as 'the thing things', 'care cares', 'temporality temporalizes', would seem to be a tautology, amounting to saying a thing is what it is or does what it does. As Schöfer indicates, it is the form of '*natura naturans*' used by the scholastics 'to signify divine nature, which renews itself from itself, circles in itself, and remains identical with itself, and whose activity was thought to consist in the fact that it had to create and perform for itself'.[19] However, with Heidegger's phrases, Schöfer argues, more is being asserted than self-identity. By using verbs that are 'synonymous' with their nouns, he suggests, the verb content is 'deconcretized' and made 'functional', which is to say that what are customarily referred to as things, such as a world 'out there', temporality as something which 'passes by', in Heidegger's phrases, become generative processes in which our being, Dasein, is set;[20] the world is not simply 'out there', laid out and inactive, but is rather a state of being which is brought into being and organized through a series of operations. If you are seeking to formulate an ontology in which entities unfold through structured, articulated openings that do not break down into subject–object compartmentalization, then one way to achieve this formulation is to turn what are ordinarily 'object' words into 'action' words. The worldliness is a priori – prior to experience – in the sense that it is the articulacy or jointedness of the structure which has to be in place to allow worldly relations to open and form. So the world worlds in that the space and time in which we find ourselves are not properties of a domain that is external to us, surrounding us, but a dynamic set of relationships structuring, coursing through, and making possible all the interactions which we come to think of as our locatedness in (of course, I can't say 'the world' so instead I shall employ Heideggerian terminology for human existence) a series of engaged concerns.

The term 'earth', as in the truth of art letting us see the 'strife of world and earth', reinforces this sense of worldliness. 'Earth' for Heidegger is not simply matter conceived of as an inert substance, the stuff out of which something is made. Rather, it is a ground of potency, a condition out of which something can arise as well as a condition which that something can sink back into. Bear in mind that Heidegger is erecting an ontology in which things are drawn into being, as opposed to things already existing within an external, mind-independent realm, and so he needs to refer to a background or potent source out of which entities can arise. He often relies on the metaphor of 'flowering' to describe truth as disclosure. For example, modern physics, he claims in 'The Question Concerning Technology', is dependent upon technical apparatus for the disclosure or 'bringing-forth' of a realm of representation beyond human visualizability – 'the bursting of a blossom into bloom', as he describes it[21] – but, he warns us, unless we are aware of the fundamentally disclosive nature of technology, we stand to lose sight of the fact that, for each realm which is revealed to us, other potential realms remain undisclosed.[22]

In creating a world, the truthfulness of a work resides not solely in its creating a series of relations which open onto the way someone might abide, but also in its standing or remaining as the material object which achieves the opening of a world. 'In fabricating equipment – for example, an axe,' Heidegger observes, 'stone is used, and used up. It disappears into usefulness. The material is all the better and more suitable the less it resists perishing in the equipmental being of the equipment.' In other words, the more a material 'disappears' or 'perishes' in its application, the more readily it enables the task in hand. 'By contrast,' he continues, 'the temple-work, in setting up a world, does not cause the material to disappear, but rather causes it to come forth for the very first time and to come into the Open of the work's world.' That is to say, the 'strife of world and earth' in the artwork is the tension between, on the one hand, the artwork stimulating our perception of a world of possible events and interactions while, on the other hand, our remaining

aware that this world has been achieved – opened up – through materials. When we use a tool successfully, we see or feel right through it; we are not aware of it. But with an artwork, our perception doesn't just pass through the pigments, the stone, the setting. Rather, we maintain a simultaneous double-awareness of material and the lived associations which the worked material evokes. Braver makes the point well in relation to Van Gogh's painting *Starry Night*: 'We can look "through" the painting to what it depicts, namely, the villagers' world – their daily routines, emotional lives, spiritual state, etc. The painting can, however, undergo a Gestalt switch into a piece of fabric with thick globs of paint on it, which would be earth.'[23]

Heidegger's interpretation of one of Van Gogh's 'peasant shoes' paintings in the essay has attracted criticism. According to Schapiro, Heidegger commits the very act which he warns others against: projecting a meaning onto a painting.[24] Heidegger writes:

> The artwork lets us know what shoes are in truth. It would be the worst self-deception to think that our description, as a subjective action, had first depicted everything thus and then projected it into the painting… What happens here? What is at work in the work? Van Gogh's painting is the disclosure of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, *is* in truth.

That the shoes belong to a peasant is simply an idea projected onto the painting by Heidegger, Schapiro argues, for there is biographical information on Van Gogh which indicates that the shoes depicted in actual fact belonged to the artist. Furthermore, 'the being of the shoes' which Heidegger claims to find in the painting, Schapiro asserts, is nothing 'that could not have been imagined in looking at a real pair of peasants' shoes'.[25] This would appear to undermine the case Heidegger makes for the capacity for world-disclosure to lie in the work of art and not in some old shoes, some old equipment. Derrida also finds Heidegger's interpretation of Van Gogh's painting initially 'ridiculous and lamentable'.[26] Early in his essay 'Restitutions of the Truth in Pointing', Derrida is disappointed by Heidegger's 'consumer-like hurry toward the content of a representation' and 'the massive self-assurance of the identification: "a pair of peasants' shoes", just like that!'.[27] It is almost as if Heidegger has undergone a transition from 'great thinker' to tour guide 'from the neighbouring farm'.[28]

But Derrida also seeks to 'shield Heidegger from Schapiro's verdict' on the grounds that Schapiro makes 'a certain number of simplifications, not to call them anything worse'.[29] Perhaps the greatest 'simplification' is Schapiro's assumption that Heidegger's account is intended to be a study which draws out the content of the painting on a one-to-one correspondence relation with reality. Although Heidegger states that Van Gogh 'painted such shoes several times', Schapiro seeks to identify which particular painting Heidegger was looking at, assisted by personal correspondence with Heidegger, so that he can establish which pair of shoes is depicted.[30] Yet, as Derrida points out, Heidegger does not choose a painting in the first instance but a piece of equipment; in Heidegger's words, 'a pair of peasant shoes, *for instance*' (emphasis added). Furthermore, Heidegger introduces the painting as an accessory 'to facilitate intuitive presentation (*Veranschaulichung*). By way of an accessory aid (*Für diese Nachhilfe*), a pictorial representation (*bildliche Darstellung*) suffices. For this purpose we choose a famous picture by Van Gogh.'[31] As Derrida is all too aware, this so-called line of defence only threatens to condemn Heidegger further, since he now appears to be using an artwork merely as a stand in for the shoes. But Heidegger is primarily interested in equipment, in objects as clusters of ways of being, the networks of lines of action through which Dasein defines its world, rather than objects as external, mind-independent items. To dismiss Heidegger's use of the painting as an accessory overlooks the fact that the painting is introduced as part of a world: a world of the rural, the soil, the artisanal. As Derrida asks: is this 'so alien to Van Gogh'?[32] On this reading, the painting serves not as a

representation, an image at one remove from the world it depicts, but stands, like the temple, as a part of the world it depicts. The painting stops us in our tracks and makes us aware of the shoes. It stops them from being lost in their equipmentality, from being lost in the day-to-day pattern of use. What would help to reinforce this interpretation (but which is not given by Heidegger) is an account of how the 'earth' of Van Gogh's handling of paint opens onto the world of the rural.

Ultimately, for Heidegger, 'the nature of art is poetry'. It is not his intention to construct a hierarchy of the arts, like Hegel, with poetry at the top. Rather, he is proposing that art is truest, at its most *aletheic*, when it is poetic. Verbal language, Heidegger argues, is the principal form of projection whereby a space is opened, allowing an object to appear. In projection, he writes, 'announcement is made of what it is that beings come into the Open *as*'. When we use words, we are drawing on the associations and significations which constitute everyday discourse. What the poet does is work with these in a way which defamiliarizes the familiar, which makes the usual unusual. An opening appears in the ordinariness of being, allowing new possibilities to come to light. In the 'open place' of projection, Heidegger writes, 'everything is other than usual...everything ordinary and hitherto existing becomes an unbeing'. Metaphor is a good example: two familiar but unrelated words are combined to produce a novel description, often leading to a new way of seeing the object in question, e.g. 'time is a river', 'rain is the light of the blind'. Generating 'new' ideas from 'old' concepts reflects the hermeneutic principle of speakers transcending their initial perspectives through conversation. Heidegger though would not necessarily approve of making metaphor an example. He sees the figure as being bound by the divisions of traditional metaphysics; 'the metaphorical', he writes in *The Principle of Reason*, 'only exists within metaphysics'.[33] Our concepts apply to reality carved up in a particular way, and their combination in a metaphor, no matter how creative or unprecedented, he thinks, only serves to reassert this metaphysical order. But Heidegger's concept of metaphor is a limited one: he takes it to be only a device for combining terms and leaving their boundaries intact, when, as several commentators have observed, the interaction between terms in a poetic conjunction can have ontological consequences, can affect the shape of Dasein's world.[34] Metaphor, Casenave writes, 'is a deviance in language use... which goes on to propose a new vision of things' and, as such, is congruent with the 'way-making [nature] of language' sought by Heidegger.[35] He does not discuss metaphor in the 'Origin' essay but does consider the concepts of 'own' (*eigen*) and 'appropriate' (*eigentlich*) – vital for the ontological task of rethinking what belongs to categories once they have been shaken up by metaphor – in the later essays 'The Nature of Language' and 'The Way to Language'.[36]

Notes

1 See, for example, J. Collins, *Heidegger and the Nazis*, Cambridge: Icon, 2000; J. Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, London: Routledge, 1995; J.-F. Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the Jews'*, trans. A. Michel and M. Roberts, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990; R. Wolin (ed.), *The Heidegger Controversy*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993; J. Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

2 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995, H. 7, pp. 26–27. 'H' refers to the pagination of the later German editions, reproduced in the margins of the translation.

3 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, H. 12, p. 32.

4 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Stambaugh, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996, H. 60, p. 56. 'H' refers to the pagination of the later German editions, reproduced in the margins of the translation.

5 J. Stambaugh, 'Translator's preface', *Being and Time*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996, p. xiv.

6 Ibid.

7 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Macquarrie and Robinson, H. 34, p. 58.
8 Ibid., H. 37, p. 62.
9 Ibid., H. 33, p. 57.
10 Ibid., H. 357, p. 327; original emphasis.
11 J. Sallis, *Double Truth*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.
12 E. Tugendhat, 'Heidegger's idea of truth', in C. Macann (ed.), *Critical Heidegger*, London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 227–40; p. 229.
13 Ibid., p. 238.
14 M.A. Wrathall, 'Heidegger and truth as correspondence', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 1999, vol. 7, pp. 69–88.
15 M. Heidegger, 'The end of philosophy and the task of thinking', in D.F. Krell (ed.), *Basic Writings*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 446.
16 Wrathall, 'Heidegger and truth as correspondence', p. 78.
17 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Stambaugh, H. 64–65, pp. 60–61.
18 D.F. Krell, 'Introduction to "The Origin of the Work of Art"', in M. Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 145.
19 E. Schöfer, 'Heidegger's language: metalogical forms of thought and grammatical specialties', in J.J. Kockelmans (ed.), *On Heidegger and Language*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972, p. 292.
20 Ibid.
21 M. Heidegger, 'The question concerning technology', in D.F. Krell (ed.), *Basic Writings*, p. 317.
22 Although Heidegger employs the 'photosynthesis' (or 'light') metaphor from Plato, Rouse observes, Heidegger rejects both Plato's 'identification of this "lighting" with an entity (a Form)' and the notion that it can be known through reason, since, on Heidegger's terms, this would amount to turning the condition of the possibility of objects into an object. See J. Rouse, 'Heidegger on science and naturalism', in G. Gutting (ed.), *Continental Philosophy of Science*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, pp. 123–41; p. 132.
23 L. Braver, *Heidegger's Later Writings*, London: Continuum, 2009, p. 52.
24 M. Schapiro, 'The still life as a personal object – a note on Heidegger and Van Gogh', in *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist and Society*, New York: George Braziller, 1994, p. 138.
25 Ibid.
26 J. Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. G. Bennington and I. Macleod, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 292.
27 Ibid., pp. 292–93.
28 Ibid., p. 293.
29 Ibid., pp. 295, 368.
30 M. Schapiro, 'The still life as a personal object – a note on Heidegger and Van Gogh', p. 136.
31 Quoted in Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, p. 309. These lines, Derrida and his translators tell us, were omitted in the French and English translations of 'The Origin of the Work of Art'.
32 Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, p. 367.
33 M. Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. R. Lilly, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 48.
34 See R. Bruzina, 'Heidegger on metaphor and philosophy', *Cultural Hermeneutics*, 1973, vol. 1, pp. 305–24; G. Casenave, 'Heidegger and metaphor', *Philosophy Today*, 1982, vol. 26, pp. 140–47; C. Cazeaux, *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy: From Kant to Derrida*, London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 175–98; P. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. R. Czerny, K. McLaughlin, and J. Costello, London: Routledge, 1978, pp. 283–84.
35 Casenave, 'Heidegger and metaphor', p. 146.
36 Both 'The Nature of Language' and 'The Way to Language' can be found in M. Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. P.D. Hertz and J. Stambaugh, New York: Harper and Row, 1971.

■ ■ ■

THE ORIGIN OF THE WORK OF ART

MARTIN HEIDEGGER

Origin here means that from which and by which something is what it is and as it is. What something is, as it is, we call its essence. The origin of something is the source of its essence. The question concerning the origin of the work of art asks about its essential source. On the usual view, the work arises out of and by means of the activity of the artist. But by what and whence is the artist what he is? By the work; for to say that the work does credit to the master means that it is the work that first lets the artist emerge as a master of his art. The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other. Nevertheless, neither is the sole support of the other. In themselves and in their interrelations artist and work *are* each of them by virtue of a third thing which is prior to both, namely, that which also gives artist and work of art their names – art.

As necessarily as the artist is the origin of the work in a different way than the work is the origin of the artist, so it is equally certain that, in a still different way, art is the origin of both artist and work. But can art be an origin at all? Where and how does art occur? Art – this is nothing more than a word to which nothing actual any longer corresponds. It may pass for a collective idea under which we find a place for that which alone is actual in art: works and artists. Even if the word *art* were taken to signify more than a collective notion, what is meant by the word could exist only on the basis of the actuality of works and artists. Or is the converse the case? Do works and artists exist only because art exists as their origin?

Whatever the decision may be, the question of the origin of the work of art becomes a question about the essence of art. Since the question whether and how art in general exists must still remain open, we shall attempt to discover the essence of art in the place where art undoubtedly prevails in an actual way. Art essentially unfolds in the artwork. But what and how is a work of art?

What art is should be inferable from the work. What the work of art is we can come to know only from the essence of art. Anyone can easily see that we are moving in a circle. Ordinary understanding demands that this circle be avoided because it violates logic. What art is can be gathered from a comparative examination of actual artworks. But how are we to be certain that we are indeed basing such an examination on artworks if we do not know in advance what art is? And the essence of art can no more be arrived at by a derivation from higher concepts than by a collection of characteristics of actual artworks. For such a derivation, too, already has in view the definitions that must suffice to establish that what we in advance take to be an artwork is one in fact. But selecting characteristics from among given objects, and deriving concepts from principles, are equally impossible here, and where these procedures are practised they are a self-deception.

Thus we are compelled to follow the circle. This is neither a makeshift nor a defect. To enter upon this path is the strength of thought, to continue on it is the feast of thought, assuming that thinking is a craft. Not only is the main step from work to art a circle like the step from art to work, but every separate step that we attempt circles in this circle.

In order to discover the essence of the art that actually prevails in the work, let us go to the actual work and ask the work what and how it is.

Works of art are familiar to everyone. Architectural and sculptural works can be seen installed in public places, in churches, and in dwellings. Artworks of the most diverse periods and peoples are housed in collections and exhibitions. If we consider the works in their untouched actuality and do not deceive ourselves, the result is that the works are as naturally present as are things. The picture hangs on the wall like a rifle or a hat. A painting, e.g., the one by Van Gogh that represents a pair of peasant shoes, travels from one exhibition to another. Works of

art are shipped like coal from the Ruhr and logs from the Black Forest. During the First World War, Hölderlin's hymns were packed in the soldier's knapsack together with cleaning gear. Beethoven's quartets lie in the storerooms of the publishing house like potatoes in a cellar.

All works have this thingly character. What would they be without it? But perhaps this rather crude and external view of the work is objectionable to us. Shippers or helpers in museums may operate with such conceptions of the work of art. We, however, have to take works as they are encountered by those who experience and enjoy them. But even the much-vaunted aesthetic experience cannot get around the thingly aspect of the artwork. There is something stony in a work of architecture, wooden in a carving, colored in a painting, spoken in a linguistic work, sonorous in a musical composition. The thingly element is so irremovably present in the artwork that we are compelled rather to say conversely that the architectural work is in stone, the carving is in wood, the painting in color, the linguistic work in speech, the musical composition in sound. 'Obviously,' it will be replied. No doubt. But what is this self-evident thingly element in the work of art?

Presumably it becomes superfluous and confusing to inquire into this feature, since the artwork is something else over and above the thingly element. This something else in the work constitutes its artistic nature. The artwork is, to be sure, a thing that is made, but it says something other than what the mere thing itself is, *allo agoreuei*. The work makes public something other than itself; it manifests something other; it is an allegory. In the work of art something other is brought together with the thing that is made. To bring together is, in Greek, *symballein*. The work is a symbol.

Allegory and symbol provide the conceptual frame within whose channel of vision the artwork has long been characterized. But this one element in a work that manifests another, this one element that joins with another, is the thingly feature in the artwork. It seems almost as though the thingly element in the artwork is like the substructure into and upon which the other, proper element is built. And is it not this thingly feature in the work that the artist properly makes by his handicraft?

Our aim is to arrive at the immediate and full actuality of the work of art, for only in this way shall we discover actual art also within it. Hence we must first bring to view the thingly element of the work. To this end it is necessary that we should know with sufficient clarity what a thing is. Only then can we say whether the artwork is a thing, but a thing to which something else adheres; only then can we decide whether the work is at bottom something else and not a thing at all.

Thing and work

What in truth is the thing, so far as it is a thing? When we inquire in this way, our aim is to come to know the thing-being (thingness) of the thing. The point is to discover the thingly character of the thing. To this end we have to be acquainted with the sphere to which all those entities belong which we have long called by the name of thing.

The stone in the road is a thing, as is the clod in the field. A jug is a thing, as is the well beside the road. But what about the milk in the jug and the water in the well? These too are things if the cloud in the sky and the thistle in the field, the leaf in the autumn breeze and the hawk over the wood, are rightly called by the name of thing. All these must indeed be called things, if the name is applied even to that which does not, like those just enumerated, show itself, i.e., that which does not appear. According to Kant, the whole of the world, for example, and even God himself, is a thing of this sort, a thing that does not itself appear, namely, a 'thing-in-itself.' In the language of philosophy both things-in-themselves and things that appear, all beings that in any way are, are called things.

Airplanes and radio sets are nowadays among the things closest to us, but when we have in mind the last things we think of something altogether different. Death and judgment – these are

the last things. On the whole the word 'thing' here designates whatever is not simply nothing. In this sense the work of art is also a thing, so far as it is some sort of being. Yet this concept is of no use to us, at least immediately, in our attempt to delimit entities that have the mode of being of a thing, as against those having the mode of being of a work. And besides, we hesitate to call God a thing. In the same way we hesitate to consider the peasant in the field, the stoker at the boiler, the teacher in the school as things. A man is not a thing. It is true that we speak of a young girl who is faced with a task too difficult for her as being a young thing, still too young for it, but only because we feel that being human is in a certain way missing here and think that instead we have to do here with the factor that constitutes the thingly character of things. We hesitate even to call the deer in the forest clearing, the beetle in the grass, the blade of grass a thing. We would sooner think of a hammer as a thing, or a shoe, or an ax, or a clock. But even these are not mere things. Only a stone, a clod of earth, a piece of wood are for us such mere things. Lifeless beings of nature and objects of use. Natural things and utensils are the things commonly so called.

We thus see ourselves brought back from the widest domain, within which everything is a thing (thing = *res* = *ens* = a being), including even the highest and last things, to the narrow precinct of mere things. 'Mere' here means, first, the pure thing, which is simply a thing and nothing more; but then, at the same time, it means that which is only a thing, in an almost pejorative sense. It is mere things, excluding even utensils, that count as things in the proper sense. What does the thingly character of these things, then, consist in? It is in reference to these that the thingness of things must be determinable. This determination enables us to characterize what it is that is thingly as such. Thus prepared, we are able to characterize the almost palpable actuality of works, in which something else inheres.

Now, it passes for a known fact that as far back as antiquity, no sooner was the question raised as to what beings are in general, than things in their thingness thrust themselves into prominence again and again as the standard type of beings. Consequently we are bound to meet with the definition of the thingness of things already in the traditional interpretations of beings. We thus need only to ascertain explicitly this traditional knowledge of the thing, to be relieved of the tedious labor of making our own search for the thingly character of the thing. The answers to the question 'What is the thing?' are so familiar that we no longer sense anything questionable behind them.

The interpretations of the thingness of the thing which, predominant in the course of Western thought, long ago became self-evident and are now in everyday use, may be reduced to three.

This block of granite, for example, is a mere thing. It is hard, heavy, extended, bulky, shapeless, rough, colored, partly dull, partly shiny. We can take note of all these features in the stone. Thus we acknowledge its characteristics. But still, the traits signify something proper to the stone itself. They are its properties. The thing has them. The thing? What are we thinking of when we now have the thing in mind? Obviously a thing is not merely an aggregate of traits, nor an accumulation of properties by which that aggregate arises. A thing, as everyone thinks he knows, is that around which the properties have assembled. We speak in this connection of the core of things. The Greeks are supposed to have called it *to hypokeimenon*. For them, this core of the thing was something lying at the ground of the thing, something always already there. The characteristics, however, are called *ta symbebēkota*, that which has always turned up already along with the given core and occurs along with it.

These designations are no arbitrary names. Something that lies beyond the purview of this essay speaks in them, the basic Greek experience of the Being of beings in the sense of presence. It is by these determinations, however, that the interpretation of the thingness of the thing is established which henceforth becomes standard, and the Western interpretation of the Being of beings stabilized. The process begins with the appropriation of Greek words by Roman-Latin thought. *Hypokeimenon* becomes *subiectum*; *hypostasis* becomes *substantia*; *symbebēkos* becomes

accidens. However, this translation of Greek names into Latin is in no way the innocent process it is considered to this day. Beneath the seemingly literal and thus faithful translation there is concealed, rather, a *trans*lation of Greek experience into a different way of thinking. *Roman thought takes over the Greek words without a corresponding, equally original experience of what they say, without the Greek word*. The rootlessness of Western thought begins with this translation.

According to current opinion, this definition of the thingness of the thing as the substance with its accidents seems to correspond to our natural outlook on things. No wonder that the current attitude toward things – our way of addressing ourselves to things and speaking about them – has adapted itself to this common view of the thing. A simple propositional statement consists of the subject, which is the Latin translation, hence already a reinterpretation, of *hypokeimenon*, and the predicate, in which the thing's traits are stated of it. Who would have the temerity to assail these simple fundamental relations between thing and statement, between sentence structure and thing-structure? Nevertheless, we must ask: Is the structure of a simple propositional statement (the combination of subject and predicate) the mirror image of the structure of the thing (of the union of substance with accidents)? Or could it be that even the structure of the thing as thus envisaged is a projection of the framework of the sentence?

What could be more obvious than that man transposes his propositional way of understanding things into the structure of the thing itself? Yet this view, seemingly critical yet actually rash and ill-considered, would have to explain first how such a transposition of propositional structure into the thing is supposed to be possible without the thing having already become visible. The question as to which comes first and functions as the standard, proposition-structure or thing-structure, remains to this hour undecided. It even remains doubtful whether in this form the question is at all decidable.

Actually, the sentence structure does not provide the standard for the pattern of thing-structure, nor is the latter simply mirrored in the former. Both sentence and thing-structure derive, in their typical form and their possible mutual relationship, from a common and more original source. In any case this first interpretation of the thingness of the thing, the thing as bearer of its characteristic traits, despite its currency, is not as natural as it appears to be. What seems natural to us is probably just something familiar in a long tradition that has forgotten the unfamiliar source from which it arose. And yet this unfamiliar source once struck man as strange and caused him to think and to wonder.

Our confidence in the current interpretation of the thing is only seemingly well founded. But in addition this thing-concept (the thing as bearer of its characteristics) holds not only of the mere thing in its proper sense, but also of any being whatsoever. Hence it cannot be used to set apart thingly beings from non-thingly beings. Yet even before all reflection, attentive dwelling within the sphere of things already tells us that this thing-concept does not hit upon the thingly element of the thing, its independent and self-contained character. Occasionally we still have the feeling that violence has long been done to the thingly element of things and that thought has played a part in this violence, for which reason people disavow thought instead of taking pains to make it more thoughtful. But in defining the essence of the thing, what is the use of a feeling, however certain, if thought alone has the right to speak here? Perhaps, however, what we call feeling or mood, here and in similar instances, is more reasonable – that is, more intelligently perceptive – because more open to Being than all that reason which, having meanwhile become *ratio*, was misinterpreted as being rational. The hankering after the irrational, as abortive offspring of the unthought rational, therewith performed a curious service. To be sure, the current thing-concept always fits each thing. Nevertheless, it does not lay hold of the thing as it is in its own being, but makes an assault upon it.

Can such an assault perhaps be avoided – and how? Only, certainly, by granting the thing, as it were, a free field to display its thingly character directly. Everything that might interpose itself

between the thing and us in apprehending and talking about it must first be set aside. Only then do we yield ourselves to the undistorted presencing of the thing. But we do not need first to call or arrange for this situation in which we let things encounter us without mediation. The situation always prevails. In what the senses of sight, hearing, and touch convey, in the sensations of color, sound, roughness, hardness, things move us bodily, in the literal meaning of the word. The thing is the *aisthēton*, that which is perceptible by sensations in the senses belonging to sensibility. Hence the concept later becomes a commonplace according to which a thing is nothing but the unity of a manifold of what is given in the senses. Whether this unity is conceived as sum or as totality or as *Gestalt* alters nothing in the standard character of this thing-concept.

Now this interpretation of the thingness of the thing is as correct and demonstrable in every case as the previous one. This already suffices to cast doubt on its truth. If we consider moreover what we are searching for, the thingly character of the thing, then this thing-concept again leaves us at a loss. We never really first perceive a throng of sensations, e.g., tones and noises, in the appearance of things – as this thing-concept alleges; rather we hear the storm whistling in the chimney, we hear the three-motored plane, we hear the Mercedes in immediate distinction from the Volkswagen. Much closer to us than all sensations are the things themselves. We hear the door shut in the house and never hear acoustical sensations or even mere sounds. In order to hear a bare sound we have to listen away from things, divert our ear from them, i.e., listen abstractly.

In the thing-concept just mentioned there is not so much an assault upon the thing as rather an inordinate attempt to bring it into the greatest possible proximity to us. But a thing never reaches that position as long as we assign as its thingly feature what is perceived by the senses. Whereas the first interpretation keeps the thing at arm's length from us, as it were, and sets it too far off, the second makes it press too physically upon us. In both interpretations the thing vanishes. It is therefore necessary to avoid the exaggerations of both. The thing itself must be allowed to remain in its self-containment. It must be accepted in its own steadfastness. This the third interpretation seems to do, which is just as old as the first two.

That which gives things their constancy and pith but is also at the same time the source of their particular mode of sensuous pressure – colored, resonant, hard, massive – is the matter in things. In this analysis of the thing as matter (*hyle*), form (*morphē*) is already coposited. What is constant in a thing, its consistency, lies in the fact that matter stands together with a form. The thing is formed matter. This interpretation appeals to the immediate view with which the thing solicits us by its outward appearance (*eidos*). In this synthesis of matter and form a thing-concept has finally been found which applies equally to things of nature and to utensils.

This concept puts us in a position to answer the question concerning the thingly element in the work of art. The thingly element is manifestly the matter of which it consists. Matter is the substrate and field for the artist's formative action. But we could have advanced this obvious and well-known definition of the thingly element at the very outset. Why do we make a detour through other applicable thing-concepts? Because we also mistrust this concept of the thing, which represents it as formed matter.

But is not precisely this pair of concepts, matter-form, usually employed in the domain in which we are supposed to be moving? To be sure. The distinction of matter and form is *the conceptual schema which is used, in the greatest variety of ways, quite generally for all art theory and aesthetics*. This incontestable fact, however, proves neither that the distinction of matter and form is adequately founded, nor that it belongs originally to the domain of art and the artwork. Moreover, the range of application of this pair of concepts has long extended far beyond the field of aesthetics. Form and content are the most hackneyed concepts under which anything and everything may be subsumed. And if form is correlated with the rational and matter with the irrational; if the rational is taken to be the logical and the irrational the alogical; if in addition the

subject-object relation is coupled with the conceptual pair form-matter; then representation has at its command a conceptual machinery that nothing is capable of withstanding.

If, however, it is thus with the distinction between matter and form, how then shall we make use of it to lay hold of the particular domain of mere things by contrast with all other entities? But perhaps this characterization in terms of matter and form would recover its defining power if only we reversed the process of expanding and emptying these concepts. Certainly, but this presupposes that we know in what sphere of beings they realize their genuine defining power. That this is the domain of mere things is so far only an assumption. Reference to the copious use made of this conceptual framework in aesthetics might sooner lead to the idea that matter and form are specifications stemming from the essence of the artwork and were in the first place transferred from it back to the thing. Where does the matter-form structure have its origin – in the thingly character of the thing or in the workly character of the artwork?

The self-contained block of granite is something material in a definite if unshapely form. Form means here the distribution and arrangement of the material parts in spatial locations, resulting in a particular shape, namely, that of a block. But a jug, an ax, a shoe are also matter occurring in a form. Form as shape is not the consequence here of a prior distribution of the matter. The form, on the contrary, determines the arrangement of the matter. Even more, it prescribes in each case the kind and selection of the matter – impermeable for a jug, sufficiently hard for an ax, firm yet flexible for shoes. The interfusion of form and matter prevailing here is, moreover, controlled beforehand by the purposes served by jug, ax, shoes. Such usefulness is never assigned or added on afterward to a being of the type of a jug, ax, or pair of shoes. But neither is it something that floats somewhere above it as an end.

Usefulness is the basic feature from which this being regards us, that is, flashes at us and thereby is present and thus is this being. Both the formative act and the choice of material – a choice given with the act – and therewith the dominance of the conjunction of matter and form, are all grounded in such usefulness. A being that falls under usefulness is always the product of a process of making. It is made as a piece of equipment for something. As determinations of beings, accordingly, matter and form have their proper place in the essential nature of equipment. This name designates what is produced expressly for employment and use. Matter and form are in no case original determinations of the thingness of the mere thing.

A piece of equipment, a pair of shoes for instance, when finished, is also self-contained like the mere thing, but it does not have the character of having taken shape by itself like the granite boulder. On the other hand, equipment displays an affinity with the artwork insofar as it is something produced by the human hand. However, by its self-sufficient presencing the work of art is similar rather to the mere thing which has taken shape by itself and is self-contained. Nevertheless we do not count such works among mere things. As a rule it is the use-objects around us that are the nearest and the proper things. Thus the piece of equipment is half thing, because characterized by thingliness, and yet it is something more; at the same time it is half artwork and yet something less, because lacking the self-sufficiency of the artwork. Equipment has a peculiar position intermediate between thing and work, assuming that such a calculated ordering of them is permissible.

The matter-form structure, however, by which the Being of a piece of equipment is first determined, readily presents itself as the immediately intelligible constitution of every being, because here man himself as maker participates in the way in which the piece of equipment comes into being. Because equipment takes an intermediate place between mere thing and work, the suggestion is that nonequipmental beings – things and works and ultimately all beings – are to be comprehended with the help of the Being of equipment (the matter-form structure).

The inclination to treat the matter-form structure as *the* constitution of every being receives an additional impulse from the fact that on the basis of a religious faith, namely, the biblical

faith, the totality of all beings is represented in advance as something created, which here means made. The philosophy of this faith can of course assure us that all of God's creative work is to be thought of as different from the action of a craftsman. Nevertheless, if at the same time or even beforehand, in accordance with a presumed predetermination of Thomistic philosophy for interpreting the Bible, the *ens creatum* is conceived as a unity of *materia* and *forma*, then faith is expounded by way of a philosophy whose truth lies in an unconcealedness of beings which differs in kind from the world believed in by faith.

The idea of creation, grounded in faith, can lose its guiding power for knowledge of beings as a whole. But the theological interpretation of all beings, the view of the world in terms of matter and form borrowed from an alien philosophy, having once been instituted, can still remain a force. This happens in the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times. The metaphysics of the modern period rests on the form-matter structure devised in the medieval period, which itself merely recalls in its words the buried natures of *eidos* and *hyle*. Thus the interpretation of 'thing' by means of matter and form, whether it remains medieval or becomes Kantian-transcendental, has become current and self-evident. But for that reason, no less than the other interpretations mentioned of the thingness of the thing, it is an encroachment upon the thing-being of the thing.

The situation stands revealed as soon as we speak of things in the proper sense as mere things. The 'mere,' after all, means the removal of the character of usefulness and of being made. The mere thing is a sort of equipment, albeit equipment denuded of its equipmental being. Thing-being consists in what is then left over. But this remnant is not actually defined in its ontological character. It remains doubtful whether the thingly character comes to view at all in the process of stripping off everything equipmental. Thus the third mode of interpretation of the thing, that which follows the lead of the matter-form structure, also turns out to be an assault upon the thing.

These three modes of defining thingness conceive of the thing as a bearer of traits, as the unity of a manifold of sensations, as formed matter. In the course of the history of truth about beings, the interpretations mentioned have also entered into combinations, a matter we may now pass over. In such combinations, they have further strengthened their innate tendency to expand so as to apply in the same way to thing, to equipment, and to work. Thus they give rise to a mode of thought by which we think not only about thing, equipment, and work but about all beings in general. This long-familiar mode of thought preconceives all immediate experience of beings. The preconception shackles reflection on the Being of any given being. Thus it comes about that prevailing thing-concepts obstruct the way toward the thingly character of the thing as well as toward the equipmental character of equipment, and all the more toward the workly character of the work.

That is why it is necessary to know about these thing-concepts, in order thereby to take heed of their provenance and their boundless presumption, but also of their semblance of self-evidence. This knowledge becomes all the more necessary when we risk the attempt to bring to view and express in words the thingly character of the thing, the equipmental character of equipment, and the workly character of the work. To this end, however, only one element is needful: to keep at a distance all the preconceptions and assaults of the above modes of thought, to leave the thing to rest in its own self, for instance, in its thing-being. What seems easier than to let a thing be just the being that it is? Or does this turn out to be the most difficult of tasks, particularly if such an intention – to let a being be as it is – represents the opposite of the indifference that simply turns its back upon the being itself in favor of an unexamined concept of Being? We ought to turn toward the being, think about it in regard to its Being, but by means of this thinking at the same time let it rest upon itself in its very own essence.

This exertion of thought seems to meet with its greatest resistance in defining the thingness of the thing; for where else could the cause lie of the failure of the efforts mentioned? The unpretentious thing evades thought most stubbornly. Or can it be that this self-refusal of the mere thing, this

self-contained, irreducible spontaneity, belongs precisely to the essence of the thing? Must not this strange and uncommunicative feature of the essence of the thing become intimately familiar to thought that tries to think the thing? If so, then we should not force our way to its thingly character.

That the thingness of the thing is particularly difficult to express and only seldom expressible is infallibly documented by the history of its interpretation indicated above. This history coincides with the destiny in accordance with which Western thought has hitherto thought the Being of beings. However, not only do we now establish this point; at the same time we discover a clue in this history. Is it an accident that in the interpretation of the thing the view that takes matter and form as guide attains special dominance? This definition of the thing derives from an interpretation of the equipmental being of equipment. And equipment, having come into being through human making, is a being particularly familiar to human thinking. At the same time, this being that is so familiar in its Being has a peculiar intermediate position between thing and work. We shall follow this clue and search first for the equipmental character of equipment. Perhaps this will suggest something to us about the thingly character of the thing and the workly character of the work. We must only avoid making thing and work prematurely into subspecies of equipment. We are disregarding the possibility, however, that differences relating to the essential history of Being may yet also be present in the way equipment *is*.

But what path leads to the equipmental quality of equipment? How shall we discover what a piece of equipment truly is? The procedure necessary at present must plainly avoid any attempts that again immediately entail the encroachments of the usual interpretations. We are most easily insured against this if we simply describe some equipment without any philosophical theory.

We choose as example a common sort of equipment – a pair of peasant shoes. We do not even need to exhibit actual pieces of this sort of useful article in order to describe them. Everyone is acquainted with them. But since it is a matter here of direct description, it may be well to facilitate the visual realization of them. For this purpose a pictorial representation suffices. We shall choose a well-known painting by Van Gogh, who painted such shoes several times. But what is there to see here? Everyone knows what shoes consist of. If they are not wooden or bast shoes, there will be leather soles and uppers, joined together by thread and nails. Such gear serves to clothe the feet. Depending on the use to which the shoes are to be put, whether for work in the field or for dancing, matter and form will differ.

Such statements, no doubt correct, only explicate what we already know. The equipmental quality of equipment consists in its usefulness. But what about this usefulness itself? In conceiving it, do we already conceive along with it the equipmental character of equipment? In order to succeed in doing this, must we not look out for useful equipment in its use? The peasant woman wears her shoes in the field. Only here are they what they are. They are all the more genuinely so, the less the peasant woman thinks about the shoes while she is at work, or looks at them at all, or is even aware of them. She stands and walks in them. That is how shoes actually serve. It is in this process of the use of equipment that we must actually encounter the character of equipment.

As long as we only imagine a pair of shoes in general, or simply look at the empty, unused shoes as they merely stand there in the picture, we shall never discover what the equipmental being of the equipment in truth is. From Van Gogh's painting we cannot even tell where these shoes stand. There is nothing surrounding this pair of peasant shoes in or to which they might belong – only an undefined space. There are not even clods of soil from the field or the field-path sticking to them, which would at least hint at their use. A pair of peasant shoes and nothing more. And yet.

From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind. On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles stretches the

loneliness of the field-path as evening falls. In the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining worry as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, the trembling before the impending childbed and shivering at the surrounding menace of death. This equipment belongs to the *earth*, and it is protected in the *world* of the peasant woman. From out of this protected belonging the equipment itself rises to its resting-within-itself.

But perhaps it is only in the picture that we notice all this about the shoes. The peasant woman, on the other hand, simply wears them. If only this simple wearing were so simple. When she takes off her shoes late in the evening, in deep but healthy fatigue, and reaches out for them again in the still dim dawn, or passes them by on the day of rest, she knows all this without noticing or reflecting. The equipmental being of the equipment consists indeed in its usefulness. But this usefulness itself rests in the abundance of an essential Being of the equipment. We call it reliability. By virtue of this reliability the peasant woman is made privy to the silent call of the earth; by virtue of the reliability of the equipment she is sure of her world. World and earth exist for her, and for those who are with her in her mode of being, only thus – in the equipment. We say 'only' and therewith fall into error; for the reliability of the equipment first gives to the simple world its security and assures to the earth the freedom of its steady thrust.

The equipmental being of equipment, reliability, keeps gathered within itself all things according to their manner and extent. The usefulness of equipment is nevertheless only the essential consequence of reliability. The former vibrates in the latter and would be nothing without it. A single piece of equipment is worn out and used up; but at the same time the use itself also falls into disuse, wears away, and becomes usual. Thus equipmentality wastes away, sinks into mere stuff. In such wasting, reliability vanishes. This dwindling, however, to which use-things owe their boringly obtrusive usualness, is only one more testimony to the original essence of equipmental being. The worn-out usualness of the equipment then obtrudes itself as the sole mode of being, apparently peculiar to it exclusively. Only blank usefulness now remains visible. It awakens the impression that the origin of equipment lies in a mere fabricating that impresses a form upon some matter. Nevertheless, in its genuinely equipmental being, equipment stems from a more distant source. Matter and form and their distinction have a deeper origin.

The repose of equipment resting within itself consists in its reliability. Only in this reliability do we discern what equipment in truth is. But we still know nothing of what we first sought: the thing's thingly character. And we know nothing at all of what we really and solely seek: the workly character of the work in the sense of the work of art.

Or have we already learned something unwittingly – in passing, so to speak – about the work-being of the work?

The equipmental quality of equipment was discovered. But how? Not by a description and explanation of a pair of shoes actually present; not by a report about the process of making shoes; and also not by the observation of the actual use of shoes occurring here and there; but only by bringing ourselves before Van Gogh's painting. This painting spoke. In the nearness of the work we were suddenly somewhere else than we usually tend to be.

The artwork lets us know what shoes are in truth. It would be the worst self-deception to think that our description, as a subjective action, had first depicted everything thus and then projected it into the painting. If anything is questionable here, it is rather that we experienced too little in the nearness of the work and that we expressed the experience too crudely and too literally. But above all, the work did not, as it might seem at first, serve merely for a better visualizing of what a piece of equipment is. Rather, the equipmentality of equipment first expressly comes to the fore through the work and only in the work.

What happens here? What is at work in the work? Van Gogh's painting is the disclosure of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, *is* in truth. This being emerges into the unconcealment of its Being. The Greeks called the unconcealment of beings *aletheia*. We say 'truth' and think little enough in using this word. If there occurs in the work a disclosure of a particular being, disclosing what and how it is, then there is here an occurring, a happening of truth at work.

In the work of art the truth of beings has set itself to work. 'To set' means here 'to bring to stand.' Some particular being, a pair of peasant shoes, comes in the work to stand in the light of its Being. The Being of beings comes into the steadiness of its shining.

The essence of art would then be this: the truth of beings setting itself to work. But until now art presumably has had to do with the beautiful and beauty, and not with truth. The arts that produce such works are called the fine arts, in contrast with the applied or industrial arts that manufacture equipment. In fine art the art itself is not beautiful, but is called so because it produces the beautiful. Truth, in contrast, belongs to logic. Beauty, however, is reserved for aesthetics.

But perhaps the proposition that art is truth setting itself to work intends to revive the fortunately obsolete view that art is an imitation and depiction of something actual? The reproduction of something at hand requires, to be sure, agreement with the actual being, adaptation to it; the Middle Ages called it *adaequatio*; Aristotle already spoke of *homoiōsis*. Agreement with what *is* has long been taken to be the essence of truth. But then, is it our opinion that this painting by Van Gogh depicts a pair of peasant shoes somewhere at hand, and is a work of art because it does so successfully? Is it our opinion that the painting draws a likeness from something actual and transposes it into a product of artistic – production? By no means.

The work, therefore, is not the reproduction of some particular entity that happens to be at hand at any given time; it is, on the contrary, the reproduction of things' general essence. But then where and how is this general essence, so that artworks are able to agree with it? With what essence of what thing should a Greek temple agree? Who could maintain the impossible view that the Idea of Temple is represented in the building? And yet, truth is set to work in such a work, if it is a work. Or let us think of Hölderlin's hymn, 'The Rhine.' What is pregiven to the poet, and how is it given, so that it can then be regiven in the poem? And if in the case of this hymn and similar poems the idea of a copy-relation between something already actual and the artwork clearly fails, the view that the work is a copy is confirmed in the best possible way by a work of the kind presented in C. F. Meyer's poem 'Roman Fountain.'

Roman Fountain

The jet ascends and falling fills
The marble basin circling round;
This, veiling itself over, spills
Into a second basin's ground.
The second in such plenty lives,
Its bubbling flood a third invests,
And each at once receives and gives
And streams and rests.

This is neither a poetic painting of a fountain actually present nor a reproduction of the general essence of a Roman fountain. Yet truth is set into the work. What truth is happening in the work? Can truth happen [*geschehen*] at all and thus be historical [*geschichtlich*]? Yet truth, people say, is something timeless and supertemporal.

We seek the actuality of the artwork in order actually to find there the art prevailing within it. The thingly substructure is what proved to be the most immediate actuality in the work. But

to comprehend this thingly feature the traditional thing-concepts are not adequate; for they themselves fail to grasp the essence of the thing. The currently predominant thing-concept, thing as formed matter, is not even derived from the essence of the thing but from the essence of equipment. It also turned out that equipmental being generally has long since occupied a peculiar preeminence in the interpretation of beings. This preeminence of equipmentality, which, however, has never been expressly thought, suggested that we pose the question of equipment anew while avoiding the current interpretations.

We allowed a work to tell us what equipment is. By this means, almost clandestinely, it came to light what is at work in the work: the disclosure of the particular being in its Being, the happening of truth. If, however, the actuality of the work can be defined solely by means of what is at work in the work, then what about our intention to seek out the actual artwork in its actuality? As long as we supposed that the actuality of the work lay primarily in its thingly substructure we were going astray. We are now confronted by a remarkable result of our considerations – if it still deserves to be called a result at all. Two points become clear:

First, the dominant thing-concepts are inadequate as means of grasping the thingly aspect of the work.

Second, what we tried to treat as the most immediate actuality of the work, its thingly substructure, does not belong to the work in that way at all.

As soon as we look for such a thingly substructure in the work, we have unwittingly taken the work as equipment, to which we then also ascribe a superstructure supposed to contain its artistic quality. But the work is not a piece of equipment that is fitted out in addition with an aesthetic value that adheres to it. The work is no more anything of the kind than the bare thing is a piece of equipment that merely lacks the specific equipmental characteristics of usefulness and being made.

Our formulation of the question of the work has been shaken because we asked, not about the work, but half about a thing and half about equipment. Still, this formulation of the question was not first developed by us. It is the formulation native to aesthetics. The way in which aesthetics views the artwork from the outset is dominated by the traditional interpretation of all beings. Yet the shaking of this accustomed formulation is not the essential point. What matters is a first opening of our vision to the fact that what is workly in the work, equipmental in equipment, and thingly in the thing comes closer to us only when we think the Being of beings. To this end it is necessary beforehand that the barriers of our preconceptions fall away and that the current pseudo-concepts be set aside. That is why we had to take this detour. But it brings us directly to a road that may lead to a determination of the thingly feature in the work. The thingly feature in the work should not be denied; but if it belongs admittedly to the work-being of the work, it must be conceived by way of the work's workly nature. If this is so, then the road toward the determination of the thingly reality of the work leads not from thing to work but from work to thing.

The artwork opens up in its own way the Being of beings. This opening up, i.e., this revealing, i.e., the truth of beings, happens in the work. In the artwork, the truth of beings has set itself to work. Art is truth setting itself to work. What is truth itself, that it sometimes propriates as art? What is this setting-itself-to-work?

The work and truth

The origin of the artwork is art. But what is art? Art is actual in the artwork. Hence we first seek the actuality of the work. In what does it consist? Artworks universally display a thingly character, albeit in a wholly distinct way. The attempt to interpret this thing-character of the work with the aid of the usual thing-concepts failed – not only because these concepts do not lay hold of the thingly feature, but because, in raising the question of its thingly substructure,

we force the work into a preconceived framework by which we obstruct our own access to the work-being of the work. Nothing can be discovered about the thingly aspect of the work so long as the pure self-subsistence of the work has not distinctly displayed itself.

Yet is the work ever in itself accessible? To gain access to the work, it would be necessary to remove it from all relations to something other than itself, in order to let it stand on its own for itself alone. But the artist's most peculiar intention already aims in this direction. The work is to be released by the artist to its pure self-subsistence. It is precisely in great art – and only such art is under consideration here – that the artist remains inconsequential as compared with the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge.

Well, then, the works themselves stand and hang in collections and exhibitions. Yet are they here in themselves as the works they themselves are, or are they not rather here as objects of the art industry? Works are made available for public and private art appreciation. Official agencies assume the care and maintenance of works. Connoisseurs and critics busy themselves with them. Art dealers supply the market. Art-historical study makes the works the objects of a science. Yet in all this busy activity do we encounter the work itself?

The Aegina sculptures in the Munich collection, Sophocles' *Antigone* in the best critical edition, are, as the works they are, torn out of their own native sphere. However high their quality and power of impression, however good their state of preservation, however certain their interpretation, placing them in a collection has withdrawn them from their own world. But even when we make an effort to cancel or avoid such displacement of works – when, for instance, we visit the temple in Paestum at its own site or the Bamberg cathedral on its own square – the world of the work that stands there has perished.

World-withdrawal and world-decay can never be undone. The works are no longer the works they were. It is they themselves, to be sure, that we encounter there, but they themselves are gone by. As bygone works they stand over against us in the realm of tradition and conservation. Henceforth they remain merely such objects. Their standing before us is still indeed a consequence of, but no longer the same as, their former self-subsistence. This self-subsistence has fled from them. The whole art industry, even if carried to the extreme and exercised in every way for the sake of works themselves, extends only to the object-being of the works. But this does not constitute their work-being.

However, does the work still remain a work if it stands outside all relations? Is it not essential for the work to stand in relations? Yes, of course – except that it remains to ask in what relations it stands.

Where does a work belong? The work belongs, as work, uniquely within the realm that is opened up by itself. For the work-being of the work occurs essentially and only in such opening up. We said that in the work there was a happening of truth at work. The reference to Van Gogh's picture tried to point to this happening. With regard to it there arose the question as to what truth is and how truth can happen.

We now ask the question of truth with a view to the work. But in order to become more familiar with what the question involves, it is necessary to make visible once more the happening of truth in the work. For this attempt let us deliberately select a work that cannot be ranked as representational art.

A building, a Greek temple, portrays nothing. It simply stands there in the middle of the rock-cleft valley. The building encloses the figure of the god, and in this concealment lets it stand out into the holy precinct through the open portico. By means of the temple, the god is present in the temple. This presence of the god is in itself the extension and delimitation of the precinct as a holy precinct. The temple and its precinct, however, do not fade away into the indefinite. It is the temple-work that first fits together and at the same time gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human being. The all-governing

expanse of this open relational context is the world of this historical people. Only from and in this expanse does the nation first return to itself for the fulfillment of its vocation.

Standing there, the building rests on the rocky ground. This resting of the work draws up out of the rock the obscurity of that rock's bulky yet spontaneous support. Standing there, the building holds its ground against the storm raging above it and so first makes the storm itself manifest in its violence. The luster and gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing only by the grace of the sun, first brings to radiance the light of the day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of the night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air. The steadfastness of the work contrasts with the surge of the surf, and its own repose brings out the raging of the sea. Tree and grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket first enter into their distinctive shapes and thus come to appear as what they are. The Greeks early called this emerging and rising in itself and in all things *physis*. It illuminates also that on which and in which man bases his dwelling. We call this ground the *earth*. What this word says is not to be associated with the idea of a mass of matter deposited somewhere, or with the merely astronomical idea of a planet. Earth is that whence the arising brings back and shelters everything that arises as such. In the things that arise, earth occurs essentially as the sheltering agent.

The temple-work, standing there, opens up a world and at the same time sets this world back again on earth, which itself only thus emerges as native ground. But men and animals, plants and things, are never present and familiar as unchangeable objects, only to represent incidentally also a fitting environment for the temple, which one fine day is added to what is already there. We shall get closer to what *is*, rather, if we think of all this in reverse order, assuming of course that we have, to begin with, an eye for how differently everything then faces us. Mere reversing, done for its own sake, reveals nothing.

The temple, in its standing there, first gives to things their look and to men their outlook on themselves. This view remains open as long as the work is a work, as long as the god has not fled from it. It is the same with the sculpture of the god, a votive offering of the victor in the athletic games. It is not a portrait whose purpose is to make it easier to realize how the god looks; rather, it is a work that lets the god himself be present and thus *is* the god himself. The same holds for the linguistic work. In the tragedy nothing is staged or displayed theatrically, but the battle of the new gods against the old is being fought. The linguistic work, originating in the speech of the people, does not refer to this battle; it transforms the people's saying so that now every living word fights the battle and puts up for decision what is holy and what unholy, what great and what small, what brave and what cowardly, what lofty and what flightly, what master and what slave (see Heraclitus, Fragment 53).

In what, then, does the work-being of the work consist? Keeping steadily in view the points just crudely enough indicated, two essential features of the work may for the moment be brought out more distinctly. We set out here, from the long familiar foreground of the work's being, the thingly character which gives support to our customary attitude toward the work.

When a work is brought into a collection or placed in an exhibition we say also that it is 'set up.' But this setting up differs essentially from setting up in the sense of erecting a building, raising a statue, presenting a tragedy at a holy festival. The latter setting up is erecting in the sense of dedication and praise. Here 'setting up' no longer means a bare placing. To dedicate means to consecrate, in the sense that in setting up the work the holy is opened up as holy and the god is invoked into the openness of his presence. Praise belongs to dedication as doing honor to the dignity and splendor of the god. Dignity and splendor are not properties beside and behind which the god, too, stands as something distinct, but it is rather in the dignity, in the splendor that the god comes to presence. In the reflected glory of this splendor there glows, i.e., there clarifies, what we called the world. To e-rect means: to open the right in the sense of a guiding

measure, a form in which what is essential gives guidance. But why is the setting up of a work an erecting that consecrates and praises? Because the work, in its work-being, demands it. How is it that the work comes to demand such a setting up? Because it itself, in its own work-being, is something that sets up. What does the work, as work, set up? Towering up within itself, the work opens up a *world* and keeps it abidingly in force.

To be a work means to set up a world. But what is it to be a world? The answer was hinted at when we referred to the temple. On the path we must follow here, the essence of world can only be indicated. What is more, this indication limits itself to warding off anything that might at first distort our view of the essential.

The world is not the mere collection of the countable or uncountable, familiar and unfamiliar things that are at hand. But neither is it a merely imagined framework added by our representation to the sum of such given things. The *world worlds*, and is more fully in being than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we believe ourselves to be at home. World is never an object that stands before us and can be seen. World is the ever-nonobjective to which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing and curse keep us transported into Being. Wherever those utterly essential decisions of our history are made, are taken up and abandoned by us, go unrecognized and are rediscovered by new inquiry, there the world worlds. A stone is worldless. Plant and animal likewise have no world; but they belong to the covert throng of a surrounding into which they are linked. The peasant woman, on the other hand, has a world because she dwells in the overtness of beings. Her equipment, in its reliability, gives to this world a necessity and nearness of its own. By the opening up of a world, all things gain their lingering and hastening, their remoteness and nearness, their scope and limits. In a world's worlding is gathered that spaciousness out of which the protective grace of the gods is granted or withheld. Even this doom, of the god remaining absent, is a way in which world worlds.

A work, by being a work, makes space for that spaciousness. 'To make space for' means here especially to liberate the free space of the open region and to establish it in its structure. This installing occurs through the erecting mentioned earlier. The work as work sets up a world. The work holds open the open region of the world. But the setting up of a world is only the first essential feature in the work-being of a work to be referred to here. Starting again from the foreground of the work, we shall attempt to make clear in the same way the second essential feature that belongs with the first.

When a work is created, brought forth out of this or that work material – stone, wood, metal, color, language, tone – we say also that it is made, set forth out of it. But just as the work requires a setting up in the sense of a consecrating-praising erection, because the work's work-being consists in the setting up of a world, so a setting forth is needed because the work-being of the work itself has the character of setting forth. The work as work, in its essence, is a setting forth. But what does the work set forth? We come to know about this only when we explore what comes to the fore and is customarily spoken of as the production [*Herstellung*, literally, 'setting forth'] of works.

To work-being there belongs the setting up of a world. Thinking of it within this perspective, what is the essence of that in the work which is usually called the work material? Because it is determined by usefulness and serviceability, equipment takes into its service that of which it consists: the matter. In fabricating equipment – e.g., an ax – stone is used, and used up. It disappears into usefulness. The material is all the better and more suitable the less it resists vanishing in the equipmental being of the equipment. By contrast the temple-work, in setting up a world, does not cause the material to disappear, but rather causes it to come forth for the very first time and to come into the open region of the work's world. The rock comes to bear and rest and so first becomes rock; metals come to glitter and shimmer, colors to glow, tones to sing, the word to say.

All this comes forth as the work sets itself back into the massiveness and heaviness of stone, into the firmness and pliancy of wood, into the hardness and luster of metal, into the brightening and darkening of color, into the clang of tone, and into the naming power of the word.

That into which the work sets itself back and which it causes to come forth in this setting back of itself we called the earth. Earth is that which comes forth and shelters. Earth, irreducibly spontaneous, is effortless and untiring. Upon the earth and in it, historical man grounds his dwelling in the world. In setting up a world, the work sets forth the earth. This setting forth must be thought here in the strict sense of the word. The work moves the earth itself into the open region of a world and keeps it there. *The work lets the earth be an earth*.

But why must this setting forth of the earth happen in such a way that the work sets itself back into it? What is the earth that it attains to the unconcealed in just such a manner? A stone presses downward and manifests its heaviness. But while this heaviness exerts an opposing pressure upon us it denies us any penetration into it. If we attempt such a penetration by breaking open the rock, it still does not display in its fragments anything inward that has been opened up. The stone has instantly withdrawn again into the same dull pressure and bulk of its fragments. If we try to lay hold of the stone's heaviness in another way, by placing the stone on a balance, we merely bring the heaviness into the form of a calculated weight. This perhaps very precise determination of the stone remains a number, but the weight's burden has escaped us. Color shines and wants only to shine. When we analyze it in rational terms by measuring its wavelengths, it is gone. It shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained. Earth thus shatters every attempt to penetrate it. It causes every merely calculating importunity upon it to turn into a destruction. This destruction may herald itself under the appearance of mastery and of progress in the form of the technical-scientific objectivation of nature, but this mastery nevertheless remains an impotence of will. The earth appears openly cleared as itself only when it is perceived and preserved as that which is essentially undisclosable, that which shrinks from every disclosure and constantly keeps itself closed up. All things of earth, and the earth itself as a whole, flow together into a reciprocal accord. But this confluence is not a blurring of their outlines. Here there flows the bordering stream, restful within itself, which delimits everything present in its presencing. Thus in each of the self-secluding things there is the same not-knowing-of-one-another. The earth is essentially self-secluding. To set forth the earth means to bring it into the open region as the self-secluding.

This setting forth of the earth is achieved by the work as it sets itself back into the earth. The self-seclusion of earth, however, is not a uniform, inflexible staying under cover, but unfolds itself in an inexhaustible variety of simple modes and shapes. To be sure, the sculptor uses stone just as the mason uses it, in his own way. But he does not use it up. That happens in a certain way only where the work miscarries. To be sure, the painter also uses pigment, but in such a way that color is not used up but rather only now comes to shine forth. To be sure, the poet also uses the word – not, however, like ordinary speakers and writers who have to use them up, but rather in such a way that the word only now becomes and remains truly a word.

Nowhere in the work is there any trace of a work material. It even remains doubtful whether, in the essential definition of equipment, what the equipment consists of is properly described in its equipmental essence as matter.

The setting up of a world and the setting forth of earth are two essential features in the work-being of the work. They belong together, however, in the unity of work-being. This is the unity we seek when we ponder the self-subsistence of the work and try to tell of this closed, unitary repose of self-support.

However, in the essential features just mentioned, if our account has any validity at all, we have indicated in the work rather a happening and in no sense a repose. For what is rest if not the

opposite of motion? It is at any rate not an opposite that excludes motion from itself, but rather includes it. Only what is in motion can rest. The mode of rest varies with the kind of motion. In motion as the mere displacement of a physical body, rest is, to be sure, only the limiting case of motion. Where rest includes motion, there can exist a repose which is an inner concentration of motion, hence supreme agitation, assuming that the mode of motion requires such a rest. Now, the repose of the work that rests in itself is of this sort. We shall therefore come nearer to this repose if we can succeed in grasping the state of movement of the happening in work-being in its unity. We ask: What relation do the setting up of a world and the setting forth of the earth exhibit in the work itself?

The world is the self-opening openness of the broad paths of the simple and essential decisions in the destiny of a historical people. The earth is the spontaneous forthcoming of that which is continually self-secluding and to that extent sheltering and concealing. World and earth are essentially different from one another and yet are never separated. The world grounds itself on the earth, and earth juts through world. Yet the relation between world and earth does not wither away into the empty unity of opposites unconcerned with one another. The world, in resting upon the earth, strives to surmount it. As self-opening it cannot endure anything closed. The earth, however, as sheltering and concealing, tends always to draw the world into itself and keep it there.

The opposition of world and earth is strife. But we would surely all too easily falsify its essence if we were to confound strife with discord and dispute, and thus see it only as disorder and destruction. In essential strife, rather, the opponents raise each other into the self-assertion of their essential natures. Self-assertion of essence, however, is never a rigid insistence upon some contingent state, but surrender to the concealed originality of the provenance of one's own Being. In strife, each opponent carries the other beyond itself. Thus the strife becomes ever more intense as striving, and more properly what it is. The more strife, for its part, outdoes itself, the more inflexibly do the opponents let themselves go into the intimacy of simple belonging to one another. The earth cannot dispense with the open region of the world if it itself is to appear as earth in the liberated surge of its self-seclusion. The world in turn cannot soar out of the earth's sight if, as the governing breadth and path of all essential destiny, it is to ground itself on something decisive.

In setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work is an instigating of this strife. This does not happen so that the work should at the same time settle and put an end to strife by an insipid agreement, but so that the strife may remain a strife. Setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work accomplishes this strife. The work-being of the work consists in the instigation of strife between world and earth. It is because the strife arrives at its high point in the simplicity of intimacy that the unity of the work comes about in the instigation of strife. The latter is the continually self-overreaching gathering of the work's agitation. The repose of the work that rests in itself thus has its essence in the intimacy of strife.

From this repose of the work we can now first see what is at work in the work. Until now it was a merely provisional assertion that in an artwork truth is set to work. In what way does truth happen in the work-being of the work, which now means to say, how does truth happen in the instigation of strife between world and earth? What is truth?

How slight and stunted our knowledge of the essence of truth is, is shown by the laxity we permit ourselves in using this basic word. By truth is usually meant this or that particular truth. That means: something true. A cognition articulated in a proposition can be of this sort. However, we call not only a proposition true, but also a thing, true gold in contrast with sham gold. True here means genuine, actual gold. What does the expression 'actual' mean here? To us it is what is in truth. The true is what corresponds to the actual, and the actual is what is in truth. The circle has closed again.

What does 'in truth' mean? Truth is the essence of the true. What do we have in mind when speaking of essence? Usually it is thought to be those features held in common by everything that is true. The essence is discovered in the generic and universal concept, which represents the one feature that holds indifferently for many things. This indifferent essence (essentiality in the sense of *essentia*) is, however, only the unessential essence. What does the essential essence of something consist in? Presumably it lies in what the entity *is* in truth. The true essence of a thing is determined by way of its true Being, by way of the truth of the given being. But we are now seeking not the truth of essence but the essence of truth. There thus appears a curious tangle. Is it only a curiosity or even merely the empty sophistry of a conceptual game, or is it – an abyss?

Truth means the essence of the true. We think this essence in recollecting the Greek word *aletheia*, the unconcealment of beings. Yet is this enough to define the essence of truth? Are we not passing off a mere change of word usage – unconcealment instead of truth – as a characterization of the matter at issue? Certainly we do not get beyond an interchange of names as long as we do not come to know what must have happened in order to be compelled to say the *essence* of truth in the word 'unconcealment.'

Does this require a revival of Greek philosophy? Not at all. A revival, even if such an impossibility were possible, would be of no help to us; for the hidden history of Greek philosophy consists from its beginning in this, that it does not remain in conformity with the essence of truth that flashes out in the word *aletheia*, and has to misdirect its knowing and its speaking about the essence of truth more and more into the discussion of a derivative essence of truth. The essence of truth as *aletheia* was not thought out in the thinking of the Greeks, and certainly not in the philosophy that followed after. Unconcealment is, for thought, the most concealed thing in Greek existence, although from early times it determines the presencing of everything present.

Yet why should we not be satisfied with the essence of truth that has by now been familiar to us for centuries? Truth means today and has long meant the conformity of knowledge with the matter. However, the matter must show itself to be such if knowledge and the proposition that forms and expresses knowledge are to be able to conform to it; otherwise the matter cannot become binding on the proposition. How can the matter show itself if it cannot itself stand forth out of concealment, if it does not itself stand in the unconcealed? A proposition is true by conforming to the unconcealed, to what is true. Propositional truth is always, and always exclusively, this correctness. The critical concepts of truth which, since Descartes, start out from truth as certainty, are merely variations of the definition of truth as correctness. The essence of truth which is familiar to us – correctness in representation – stands and falls with truth as unconcealment of beings.

If here and elsewhere we conceive of truth as unconcealment, we are not merely taking refuge in a more literal translation of a Greek word. We are reminding ourselves of what, unexperienced and unthought, underlies our familiar and therefore outworn essence of truth in the sense of correctness. We do, of course, occasionally take the trouble to concede that naturally, in order to understand and verify the correctness (truth) of a proposition, one really should go back to something that is already evident, and that this presupposition is indeed unavoidable. As long as we talk and believe in this way, we always understand truth merely as correctness, which of course still requires a further presupposition, that we ourselves just happen to make, heaven knows how or why.

But it is not we who presuppose the unconcealment of beings; rather, the unconcealment of beings (Being) puts us into such a condition of being that in our representation we always remain installed within and in attendance upon unconcealment. Not only must that in *conformity* with which a cognition orders itself be already in some way unconcealed. The entire *realm* in which this 'conforming to something' goes on must already occur as a whole in the unconcealed; and this holds equally of that *for* which the conformity of a proposition to a matter becomes manifest. With all our correct representations we would get nowhere, we could not even

presuppose that there already is manifest something to which we can conform ourselves, unless the unconcealment of beings had already exposed us to, placed us in that cleared realm in which every being stands for us and from which it withdraws.

But how does this take place? How does truth happen as this unconcealment? First, however, we must say more clearly what this unconcealment itself is.

Things are, and human beings, gifts, and sacrifices are, animals and plants are, equipment and works are. The particular being stands in Being. Through Being there passes a veiled fatality that is ordained between the godly and the countergodly. There is much in being that man cannot master. There is but little that comes to be known. What is known remains inexact, what is mastered insecure. Beings are never of our making, or even merely our representations, as it might all too easily seem. When we contemplate this whole as one, then we apprehend, so it appears, all that is – though we grasp it crudely enough.

And yet – beyond beings, not away from them but before them, there is still something else that happens. In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs. There is a clearing. Thought of in reference to beings, this clearing is more in being than are beings. This open center is therefore not surrounded by beings; rather, the clearing center itself encircles all that is, as does the nothing, which we scarcely know.

Beings can be as beings only if they stand within and stand out within what is cleared in this clearing. Only this clearing grants and guarantees to us humans a passage to those beings that we ourselves are not, and access to the being that we ourselves are. Thanks to this clearing, beings are unconcealed in certain changing degrees. And yet a being can be *concealed*, as well, only within the sphere of what is cleared. Each being we encounter and which encounters us keeps to this curious opposition of presencing, in that it always withholds itself at the same time in a concealment. The clearing in which beings stand is in itself at the same time concealment. Concealment, however, prevails in the midst of beings in a twofold way.

Beings refuse themselves to us down to that one and seemingly least feature which we touch upon most readily when we can say no more of beings than that they are. Concealment as refusal is not simply and only the limit of knowledge in any given circumstance, but the beginning of the clearing of what is cleared. But concealment, though of another sort, to be sure, at the same time also occurs within what is cleared. One being places itself in front of another being, the one helps to hide the other, the former obscures the latter, a few obstruct many, one denies all. Here concealment is not simple refusal. Rather, a being appears, but presents itself as other than it is.

This concealment is dissembling. If one being did not simulate another, we could not make mistakes or act mistakenly in regard to beings; we could not go astray and transgress, and especially could never overreach ourselves. That a being should be able to deceive as semblance is the condition for our being able to be deceived, not conversely.

Concealment can be a refusal or merely a dissembling. We are never fully certain whether it is the one or the other. Concealment conceals and dissembles itself. This means that the open place in the midst of beings, the clearing, is never a rigid stage with a permanently raised curtain on which the play of beings runs its course. Rather, the clearing happens only as this double concealment. The unconcealment of beings – this is never a merely existent state, but a happening. Unconcealment (truth) is neither an attribute of matters in the sense of beings, nor one of propositions.

We believe we are at home in the immediate circle of beings. Beings are familiar, reliable, ordinary. Nevertheless, the clearing is pervaded by a constant concealment in the double form of refusal and dissembling. At bottom, the ordinary is not ordinary; it is extraordinary. The essence of truth, that is, of unconcealment, is dominated throughout by a denial. Yet this denial is not a defect or a fault, as though truth were an unalloyed unconcealment that has rid itself of everything concealed. If truth could accomplish this, it would no longer be itself. *This denial, in*

the form of a double concealment, belongs to the essence of truth as unconcealment. Truth, in its essence, is un-truth. We put the matter this way in order to serve notice, with a possibly surprising trenchancy, that denial in the manner of concealment belongs to unconcealment as clearing. The proposition 'the essence of truth is un-truth' is not, however, intended to state that truth is at bottom falsehood. Nor does it mean that truth is never itself but, viewed dialectically, is also its opposite.

Truth occurs precisely as itself in that the concealing denial, as refusal, provides the steady provenance of all clearing, and yet, as dissembling, metes out to all clearing the indefeasible severity of error. Concealing denial is intended to denote that opposition in the essence of truth which subsists between clearing and concealing. It is the opposition of the original strife. The essence of truth is, in itself, the primal strife in which that open center is won within which beings stand and from which they set themselves back into themselves.

This open region happens in the midst of beings. It exhibits an essential feature that we have already mentioned. To the open region there belongs a world and the earth. But the world is not simply the open region that corresponds to clearing, and the earth is not simply the closed region that corresponds to concealment. Rather, the world is the clearing of the paths of the essential guiding directions with which all decision complies. Every decision, however, bases itself on something not mastered, something concealed, confusing; else it would never be a decision. The earth is not simply the closed region but rather that which rises up as self-closing. World and earth are always intrinsically and essentially in conflict, belligerent by nature. Only as such do they enter into the strife of clearing and concealing.

Earth juts through the world and world grounds itself on the earth only so far as truth happens as the primal strife between clearing and concealing. But how does this happen? We answer: it happens in a few essential ways. One of these ways in which truth happens is the work-being of the work. Setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work is the instigation of the strife in which the unconcealment of beings as a whole, or truth, is won.

Truth happens in the temple's standing where it is. This does not mean that something is correctly represented and rendered here, but that beings as a whole are brought into unconcealment and held therein. To hold [*halten*] originally means to take into protective heed [*hüten*]. Truth happens in Van Gogh's painting. This does not mean that something at hand is correctly portrayed, but rather that in the revelation of the equipmental being of the shoes beings as a whole – world and earth in their counterplay – attain to unconcealment.

Thus in the work it is truth, not merely something true, that is at work. The picture that shows the peasant shoes, the poem that says the Roman fountain, do not simply make manifest what these isolated beings as such are – if indeed they manifest anything at all; rather, they make unconcealment as such happen in regard to beings as a whole. The more simply and essentially the shoes are engrossed in their essence, the more directly and engagingly do all beings attain a greater degree of being along with them. That is how self-concealing Being is cleared. Light of this kind joins its shining to and into the work. This shining, joined in the work, is the beautiful. *Beauty is one way in which truth essentially occurs as unconcealment*.

We now, indeed, grasp the essence of truth more clearly in certain respects. What is at work in the work may accordingly have become clearer. But the work's now visible work-being still does not tell us anything about the work's closest and most obtrusive reality, about the thingly aspect of the work. Indeed, it almost seems as though, in pursuing the exclusive aim of grasping the work's independence as purely as possible, we had completely overlooked the one thing, that a work is always a work, which means that it is something effected. If there is anything that distinguishes the work as work, it is that the work has been created. Since the work is created, and creation requires a medium out of which and in which it creates, the thingly

element, too, enters into the work. This is incontestable. Still the question remains: How does being created belong to the work? This can be elucidated only if two points are cleared up:

1. What do being created and creation mean here in distinction from making and being made?
2. What is the inmost essence of the work itself, from which alone can be gauged how far createdness belongs to the work and how far it determines the work-being of the work?

Creation is here always thought in reference to the work. To the essence of the work there belongs the happening of truth. From the outset we define the essence of creating by its relation to the essence of truth as the unconcealment of beings. The pertinence of createdness to the work can be elucidated only by way of a more fundamental clarification of the essence of truth. The question of truth and its essence returns again.

We must raise that question once more, if the proposition that truth is at work in the work is not to remain a mere assertion.

We must now first ask in a more essential way: To what extent does the impulse toward such a thing as a work lie in the essence of truth? Of what essence is truth, that it can be set into work, or even under certain conditions must be set into work, in order to be *as* truth? But we defined the setting-into-a-work of truth as the essence of art. Hence our last question becomes:

What is truth, that it can happen as, or even must happen as, art? How is it that *there is* art at all?

Truth and art

Art is the origin of the artwork and of the artist. Origin is the provenance of the essence in which the Being of a being essentially unfolds. What is art? We seek its essence in the actual work. The actuality of the work has been defined by that which is at work in the work, by the happening of truth. This happening we think of as the instauration of strife between world and earth. Repose occurs in the concentrated agitation of this striving. The self-composure of the work is grounded here.

In the work, the happening of truth is at work. But what is thus at work is so *in* the work. This means that the actual work is here already presupposed as the bearer of this happening. At once the problem of the thingly feature of the work at hand confronts us again. One thing thus finally becomes clear: however zealously we inquire into the work's self-sufficiency, we shall still fail to find its actuality as long as we do not also agree to take the work as something worked, effected. To take it thus lies closest to us, for in the word 'work' we hear what is worked. The workly character of the work consists in its having been created by the artist. It may seem curious that this most obvious and all-clarifying definition of the work is mentioned only now.

The work's createdness, however, can obviously be grasped only in terms of the process of creation. Thus, constrained by the matter at issue, we must consent after all to go into the activity of the artist in order to arrive at the origin of the work of art. The attempt to define the work-being of the work purely in terms of the work itself proves to be unfeasible.

In turning away now from the work to examine the essence of the creative process, we should like nevertheless to keep in mind what was said first of the picture of the peasant shoes and later of the Greek temple.

We think of creation as a bringing forth. But the making of equipment, too, is a bringing forth. Handicraft – a remarkable play of language – does not, to be sure, create works, not even when we contrast, as we must, the handmade with the factory product. But what is it that distinguishes bringing forth as creation from bringing forth in the mode of making? It is as difficult to track down the essential features of the creation of works and the making of equipment as it is easy to distinguish verbally between the two modes of bringing forth. Going along with first appearances, we find the

same procedure in the activity of potter and sculptor, of joiner and painter. The creation of a work requires craftsmanship. Great artists prize craftsmanship most highly. They are the first to call for its painstaking cultivation, based on complete mastery. They above all others constantly take pains to educate themselves ever anew in thorough craftsmanship. It has often enough been pointed out that the Greeks, who knew a few things about works of art, use the same word, *technē*, for craft and art and call the craftsman and the artist by the same name: *technitēs*.

It thus seems advisable to define the essence of creative work in terms of its craft aspect. But reference to the linguistic usage of the Greeks, with their experience of the matter, must give us pause. However usual and convincing the reference may be to the Greek practice of naming craft and art by the same name, *technē*, it nevertheless remains oblique and superficial; for *technē* signifies neither craft nor art, and not at all the technical in our present-day sense; it never means a kind of practical performance.

The word *technē* denotes rather a mode of knowing. To know means to have seen, in the widest sense of seeing, which means to apprehend what is present, as such. For Greek thought the essence of knowing consists in *aletheia*, that is, in the revealing of beings. It supports and guides all comportment toward beings. *Technē*, as knowledge experienced in the Greek manner, is a bringing forth of beings in that it *brings forth* what is present as such *out of* concealment and specifically *into* the unconcealment of its appearance; *technē* never signifies the action of making.

The artist is a *technitēs* not because he is also a craftsman, but because both the setting forth of works and the setting forth of equipment occur in a bringing forth that causes beings in the first place to come forward and be present in assuming an outward aspect. Yet all this happens in the midst of the being that surges upward, growing of its own accord, *physis*. Calling art *technē* does not at all imply that the artist's action is seen in the light of craft. What looks like craft in the creation of a work is of a different sort. Such doing is determined and pervaded by the essence of creation, and indeed remains contained within that creating.

What then, if not craft, is to guide our thinking about the essence of creation? What else than a view of what is to be created – the work? Although it becomes actual only as the creative act is performed, and thus depends for its actuality upon this act, the essence of creation is determined by the essence of the work. Even though the work's createdness has a relation to creation, nevertheless both createdness and creation must be defined in terms of the work-being of the work. By now it can no longer seem strange that we first and at length dealt with the work alone, to bring its createdness into view only at the end. If createdness belongs to the work as essentially as the word 'work' makes it sound, then we must try to understand even more essentially what so far could be defined as the work-being of the work.

In the light of the essential definition of the work we have reached at this point, according to which the happening of truth is at work in the work, we are able to characterize creation as follows: to create is to let something emerge as a thing that has been brought forth. The work's becoming a work is a way in which truth becomes and happens. It all rests in the essence of truth. But what is truth, that it has to happen in such a thing as something created? How does truth have an impulse toward a work grounded in its very essence? Is this intelligible in terms of the essence of truth as thus far elucidated?

Truth is un-truth, insofar as there belongs to it the reservoir of the not-yet-revealed, the un-uncovered, in the sense of concealment. In unconcealment, as truth, there occurs also the other 'un-' of a double restraint or refusal. Truth essentially occurs as such in the opposition of clearing and double concealing. Truth is the primal strife in which, always in some particular way, the open region is won within which everything stands and from which everything withholds itself that shows itself and withdraws itself as a being. Whenever and however this strife breaks out and happens, the opponents, clearing and concealing, move apart because of it. Thus the

open region of the place of strife is won. The openness of this open region, that is, truth, can be what it is, namely, *this* openness, only if and as long as it establishes itself within its open region. Hence there must always be some being in this open region in which the openness takes its stand and attains its constancy. In thus taking possession of the open region, openness holds it open and sustains it. Setting and taking possession are here everywhere drawn from the Greek sense of *thesis*, which means a setting up in the unconcealed.

In referring to this self-establishing of openness in the open region, thinking touches on a sphere that cannot yet be explicated here. Only this much should be noted, that if the essence of the unconcealment of beings belongs in any way to Being itself (see *Being and Time*, section 44), then Being, by way of its own essence, lets the free space of openness (the clearing of the There) happen, and introduces it as a place *of the sort* in which each being emerges in its own way.

Truth happens only by establishing itself in the strife and the free space opened up by truth itself. Because truth is the opposition of clearing and concealing, there belongs to it what is here to be called *establishing*. But truth does not exist in itself beforehand, somewhere among the stars, only subsequently to descend elsewhere among beings. This is impossible for the reason alone that it is after all only the openness of beings that first affords the possibility of a somewhere and of sites filled by present beings. Clearing of openness and establishment in the open region belong together. They are the same single essence of the happening of truth. This happening is historical in multiple ways.

One essential way in which truth establishes itself in the beings it has opened up is truth setting itself into work. Another way in which truth occurs is the act that founds a political state. Still another way in which truth comes to shine forth is the nearness of that which is not simply a being, but the being that is most in being. Still another way in which truth grounds itself is the essential sacrifice. Still another way in which truth becomes is the thinker's questioning, which, as the thinking of Being, names Being in its question-worthiness. By contrast, science is not an original happening of truth, but always the cultivation of a domain of truth already opened, specifically by apprehending and confirming that which shows itself to be possibly and necessarily correct within that field. When and insofar as a science passes beyond correctness and goes on to a truth, which means that it arrives at the essential disclosure of beings as such, it is philosophy.

Because it is in the essence of truth to establish itself within beings, in order thus first to become truth, the *impulse toward the work* lies in the essence of truth as one of truth's distinctive possibilities, by which it can itself occur as being in the midst of beings.

The establishing of truth in the work is the bringing forth of a being such as never was before and will never come to be again. The bringing forth places this being in the open region in such a way that what is to be brought forth first clears the openness of the open region into which it comes forth. Where this bringing forth expressly brings the openness of beings, or truth, that which is brought forth is a work. Creation is such a bringing forth. As such a bringing, it is rather a receiving and removing within the relation to unconcealment. What, accordingly, does the createdness consist in? It may be elucidated by two essential determinations.

Truth establishes itself in the work. Truth essentially occurs only as the strife between clearing and concealing in the opposition of world and earth. Truth wills to be established in the work as this strife of world and earth. The strife is not to be resolved in a being brought forth for that purpose, nor is it to be merely housed there; the strife, on the contrary, is started by it. This being must therefore contain within itself the essential traits of the strife. In the strife the unity of world and earth is won. As a world opens itself, it submits to the decision of a historical humanity the question of victory and defeat, blessing and curse, mastery and slavery. The dawning world brings out what is as yet undecided and measureless, and thus discloses the hidden necessity of measure and decisiveness.

Yet as a world opens itself the earth comes to tower. It stands forth as that which bears all, as that which is sheltered in its own law and always wrapped in itself. World demands its decisiveness and its measure and lets beings attain to the open region of their paths. Earth, bearing and jutting, endeavors to keep itself closed and to entrust everything to its law. Strife is not a rift [*Riss*], as a mere cleft is ripped open; rather, it is the intimacy with which opponents belong to each other. This rift carries the opponents into the provenance of their unity by virtue of their common ground. It is a basic design, an outline sketch, that draws the basic features of the upsurgence of the clearing of beings. This rift does not let the opponents break apart; it brings what opposes measure and boundary into its common outline.[1]

Truth establishes itself as strife within a being that is to be brought forth only in such a way that the strife opens up in this being; that is, this being is itself brought into the rift. The rift is the drawing together, into a unity, of sketch and basic design, breach and outline. Truth establishes itself in a being in such a way, indeed, that this being itself takes possession of the open region of truth. This occupying, however, can happen only if what is to be brought forth, the rift, entrusts itself to the self-secluding element that juts into the open region. The rift must set itself back into the gravity of stone, the mute hardness of wood, the dark glow of colors. As the earth takes the rift back into itself, the rift is first set forth into the open region and thus placed, that is, set, within that which towers into the open region as self-secluding and sheltering.

The strife that is brought into the rift and thus set back into the earth and thus fixed in place is the *figure* [*Gestalt*]. Createdness of the work means truth's being fixed in place in the figure. Figure is the structure in whose shape the rift composes itself. This composed rift is the fugue of truth's shining. What is here called figure [*Gestalt*] is always to be thought in terms of the particular placing [*Stellen*] and enframing [*Ge-stell*] as which the *work* occurs when it sets itself up and sets itself forth.

In the creation of a work, the strife, as rift, must be set back into the earth, and the earth itself must be set forth and put to use as self-secluding. Such use, however, does not use up or misuse the earth as matter, but rather sets it free to be nothing but itself. This use of the earth is a working with it that, to be sure, looks like the employment of matter in handicraft. Hence the illusion that artistic creation is also an activity of handicraft. It never is. But it is at all times a use of the earth in the fixing in place of truth in the figure. In contrast, the making of equipment never directly effects the happening of truth. The production of equipment is finished when a material has been so formed as to be ready for use. For equipment to be ready means that it is released beyond itself, to be used up in usefulness.

Not so when a work is created. This becomes clear in the light of the second characteristic, which may be introduced here.

The readiness of equipment and the createdness of the work agree in this, that in each case something is produced. Yet in contrast to all other modes of production, the work is distinguished by being created so that its createdness is part of the created work. But does not this hold true for everything brought forth, indeed for anything that has in any way come to be? Everything brought forth surely has this endowment of having been brought forth, if it has any endowment at all. Certainly. However, in the work, createdness is expressly created into the created being, so that it stands out from it, from the being thus brought forth, in an expressly particular way. If this is how matters stand, then we must also be able to discover and experience the createdness explicitly in the work.

The emergence of createdness from the work does not mean that the work is to give the impression of having been made by a great artist. The point is not that the created being be certified as the performance of a capable person, so that the producer is thereby brought to public notice. It is not the *N. N. fecit* that is to be made known. Rather, the simple *factum est* is to be held forth into the open region by the work: namely this, that unconcealment of a being has

happened here, and that as this happening it happens here for the first time; or, that such a work *is* at all rather than is not. The thrust that the work, as this work is, and the uninterruptedness of this plain thrust, constitute the steadfastness of the work's self-subsistence. Precisely where the artist and the process and the circumstances of the genesis of the work remain unknown, this thrust, this '*that* it is' of createdness, emerges into view most purely from the work.

To be sure, 'that' it is made is a property also of all equipment that is available and in use. But this 'that' does not become prominent in the equipment; it disappears in usefulness. The more handy a piece of equipment is, the more inconspicuous it remains that, for example, this particular hammer is, and the more exclusively does the equipment keep itself in its equipmentality. In general, of everything present to us, we can note that it *is*; but this also, if it is noted at all, is noted only soon to fall into oblivion, as is the wont of everything commonplace. And what is more commonplace than this, that a being is? In a work, by contrast, this fact, that it *is* as a work, is just what is unusual. The event of its being created does not simply reverberate through the work; rather, the work casts before itself the eventful fact that the work is as this work, and it has constantly this fact about itself. The more essentially the work opens itself, the more luminous becomes the uniqueness of the fact that it is rather than is not. The more essentially this thrust comes into the open region, the more strange and solitary the work becomes. In the bringing forth of the work there lies this offering 'that it be.'

The question of the work's createdness ought to have brought us nearer to its workly character and therewith to its actuality. Createdness revealed itself as strife being fixed in place in the figure by means of the rift. Createdness here is itself expressly created into the work and stands as the silent thrust into the open region of the 'that.' But the work's actuality does not exhaust itself even in the createdness. On the contrary, this view of the essence of the work's createdness now enables us to take the step toward which everything thus far said tends.

The more solitarily the work, fixed in the figure, stands on its own and the more cleanly it seems to cut all ties to human beings, the more simply does the thrust come into the open that such a work *is*, and the more essentially is the extraordinary thrust to the surface and what is long-familiar thrust down. But this multiple thrusting is nothing violent, for the more purely the work is itself transported into the openness of beings – an openness opened by itself – the more simply does it transport us into this openness and thus at the same time transport us out of the realm of the ordinary. To submit to this displacement means to transform our accustomed ties to world and earth and henceforth to restrain all usual doing and prizing, knowing and looking, in order to stay within the truth that is happening in the work. Only the restraint of this staying lets what is created be the work that it is. This letting the work be a work we call preserving the work. It is only for such preserving that the work yields itself in its createdness as actual, which now means, present in the manner of a work.

Just as a work cannot be without being created, but is essentially in need of creators, so what is created cannot itself come into being without those who preserve it.

However, if a work does not find preservers, does not immediately find them capable of responding to the truth happening in the work, this does not at all mean that the work may also be a work without preservers. Being a work, it always remains tied to preservers, even and particularly when it is still only waiting for them, only pleading and persevering for them to enter into its truth. Even the oblivion into which the work can sink is not nothing; it is still a preservation. It feeds on the work. Preserving the work means standing within the openness of beings that happens in the work. This 'standing-within' of preservation, however, is a knowing. Yet knowing does not consist in mere information and notions about something. He who truly knows beings knows what he wills to do in the midst of them.

The willing here referred to, which neither merely applies knowledge nor decides beforehand, is thought in terms of the basic experience of thinking in *Being and Time*. Knowing that remains a

willing, and willing that remains a knowing, is the existing human being's ecstatic entry into the unconcealment of Being. The resoluteness intended in *Being and Time* is not the deliberate action of a subject but the opening up of human being, out of its captivity in beings, to the openness of Being.[2] However, in existence, man does not proceed from some inside to some outside; rather, the essence of *Existenz* is out-standing standing-within the essential sunderance of the clearing of beings. Neither in the creation mentioned before nor in the willing mentioned now do we think of the performance or act of a subject striving toward himself as his self-posited goal.

Willing is the sober unclosedness of that existential self-transcendence which exposes itself to the openness of beings as it is set into the work. In this way, standing-within is brought under law. Preserving the work, as knowing, is a sober standing-within the awesomeness of the truth that is happening in the work.

This knowledge, which as a willing makes its home in the work's truth, and only thus remains a knowing, does not deprive the work of its independence, does not drag it into the sphere of mere lived experience, and does not degrade it to the role of a stimulator of such experience.[3] Preserving the work does not reduce people to their private experiences, but brings them into affiliation with the truth happening in the work. Thus it grounds being for and with one another as the historical standing-out of human existence in relation to unconcealment. Most of all, knowledge in the manner of preserving is far removed from that merely aestheticizing connoisseurship of the work's formal aspects, its qualities and charms. Knowing as having seen is a being resolved; it is standing within the strife that the work has fitted into the rift.

The proper way to preserve the work is co-created and prescribed only and exclusively by the work. Preserving occurs at different levels of knowledge, with always differing degrees of scope, constancy, and lucidity. When works are offered for sheer artistic enjoyment, this does not yet prove that they stand in preservation as works.

As soon as the thrust into the awesome is parried and captured by the sphere of familiarity and connoisseurship, the art business has begun. Even a painstaking transmission of works to posterity, all scientific efforts to regain them, no longer reach the work's own being, but only a remembrance of it. But even this remembrance may still offer to the work a place from which it joins in shaping history. The work's own peculiar actuality, on the other hand, is brought to bear only where the work is preserved in the truth that happens through the work itself.

The work's actuality is determined in its basic features by the essence of the work's being. We can now return to our opening question: How do matters stand with the work's thingly feature that is to guarantee its immediate actuality? They stand so that now we no longer raise this question about the work's thingly element; for as long as we ask it, we take the work directly and as a foregone conclusion, as an object that is simply at hand. In that way we never question in terms of the work, but in our own terms. In our terms – we, who then do not let the work be a work but view it as an object that is supposed to produce this or that state of mind in us.

But what looks like the thingly element, in the sense of our usual thing-concepts, in the work taken as object, is, seen from the perspective of the work, its earthy character. The earth juts up within the work because the work essentially unfolds as something in which truth is at work and because truth essentially unfolds only by installing itself within a particular being. In the earth, however, as essentially self-secluding, the openness of the open region finds that which most intensely resists it; it thereby finds the site of its constant stand, the site in which the figure must be fixed in place.

Was it then superfluous, after all, to enter into the question of the thingly character of the thing? By no means. To be sure, the work's work-character cannot be defined in terms of its thingly character, but as against that the question about the thing's thingly character can be brought onto the right course by way of a knowledge of the work's work-character. This is no

small matter, if we recollect that those ancient, traditional modes of thought attack the thing's thingly character and make it subject to an interpretation of beings as a whole, an interpretation that remains unfit to apprehend the essence of equipment and of the work, and which makes us equally blind to the original essence of truth.

To determine the thing's thingness, neither consideration of the bearer of properties, nor that of the manifold of sense data in their unity, and least of all that of the matter-form structure regarded by itself, which is derived from equipment, is adequate. Anticipating a meaningful and weighty interpretation of the thingly character of things, we must aim at the thing's belonging to the earth. The essence of the earth, in its free and unhurried bearing and self-seclusion, reveals itself, however, only in the earth's jutting into a world, only in the opposition of the two. This strife is fixed in place in the figure of the work and becomes manifest by it. What holds true of equipment – namely, that we come to know its equipmental character specifically only through the work itself – also holds of the thingly character of the thing. The fact that we never know thingness directly, and if we know it at all, then only vaguely, and thus require the work – this fact proves indirectly that in the work's work-being the happening of truth, the opening up of beings, is at work.

But, we might finally object, if the work is indeed to bring thingness cogently into the open region, must it not then itself – and indeed before its own creation and for the sake of its creation – have been brought into a relation with the things of earth, with nature? Someone who must have known all about this, Albrecht Dürer, did after all make the well-known remark: 'For in truth, art lies hidden within nature; he who can wrest it from her, has it.' 'Wrest' here means to draw out the rift and to draw the design with the drawing-pen on the drawing-board.[4] But we at once raise the counterquestion: How can the rift be drawn out if it is not brought into the open region by the creative projection as a rift, which is to say, brought out beforehand as strife of measure and unmeasure? True, there lies hidden in nature a rift-design, a measure and a boundary and, tied to it, a capacity for bringing forth – that is, art. But it is equally certain that this art hidden in nature becomes manifest only through the work, because it lies originally in the work.

The trouble we are taking over the actuality of the work is intended as spadework for discovering art and the essence of art in the actual work. The question concerning the essence of art, the way toward knowledge of it, is first to be placed on a firm ground again. The answer to the question, like every genuine answer, is only the final result of the last step in a long series of questions. Each answer remains in force as an answer only as long as it is rooted in questioning.

The actuality of the work has become not only clearer for us in the light of its work-being, but also essentially richer. The preservers of a work belong to its createdness with an essentiality equal to that of the creators. But it is the work that makes the creators possible in their essence, the work that by its own essence is in need of preservers. If art is the origin of the work, this means that art lets those who essentially belong together at work, the creator and the preserver, originate, each in his own essence. What, however, is art itself that we call it rightly an origin?

In the work, the happening of truth is at work and, indeed, at work according to the manner of a work. Accordingly the essence of art was defined to begin with as the setting-into-work of truth. Yet this definition is intentionally ambiguous. It says on the one hand: art is the fixing in place of self-establishing truth in the figure. This happens in creation as the bringing forth of the unconcealment of beings. Setting-into-work, however, also means the bringing of work-being into movement and happening. This happens as preservation. Thus art is the creative preserving of truth in the work. *Art then is a becoming and happening of truth*. Does truth, then, arise out of nothing? It does indeed if by *nothing* we mean the sheer 'not' of beings, and if we here think of the being as something at hand in the ordinary way, which thereafter comes to light and is challenged by the existence of the work as only presumptively a true being. Truth

is never gathered from things at hand, never from the ordinary. Rather, the opening up of the open region, and the clearing of beings, happens only when the openness that makes its advent in thrownness is projected.[5]

Truth, as the clearing and concealing of beings, happens in being composed. *All art*, as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of beings, is as such, *in essence*, *poetry*. The essence of art, on which both the artwork and the artist depend, is the setting-itself-into-work of truth. It is due to art's poetic essence that, in the midst of beings, art breaks open an open place, in whose openness everything is other than usual. By virtue of the projection set into the work of the unconcealment of beings, which casts itself toward us, everything ordinary and hitherto existing becomes an unbeing. This unbeing has lost the capacity to give and keep Being as measure. The curious fact here is that the work in no way affects hitherto existing beings by causal connections. The working of the work does not consist in the taking effect of a cause. It lies in a change, happening from out of the work, of the unconcealment of beings, and this means, of Being.

Poetry, however, is not an aimless imagining of whimsicalities and not a flight of mere notions and fancies into the realm of the unreal. What poetry, as clearing projection, unfolds of unconcealment and projects ahead into the rift-design of the figure, is the open region which poetry lets happen, and indeed in such a way that only now, in the midst of beings, the open region brings beings to shine and ring out. If we fix our vision on the essence of the work and its connection with the happening of the truth of beings, it becomes questionable whether the essence of poetry, and this means at the same time the essence of projection, can be adequately thought of in terms of the power of imagination.

The essence of poetry, which has now been ascertained very broadly – but not on that account vaguely – may here be kept firmly in mind as something worthy of questioning, something that still has to be thought through.

If all art is in essence poetry, then the arts of architecture, painting, sculpture, and music must be traced back to poesy. That is pure arbitrariness. It certainly is, as long as we mean that those arts are varieties of the art of language, if it is permissible to characterize poesy by that easily misinterpretable title. But poesy is only one mode of the clearing projection of truth, i.e., of poetic composition in this wider sense. Nevertheless, the linguistic work, poetry in the narrower sense, has a privileged position in the domain of the arts.

To see this, only the right concept of language is needed. In the current view, language is held to be a kind of communication. It serves for verbal exchange and agreement, and in general for communicating. But language is not only and not primarily an audible and written expression of what is to be communicated. It not only puts forth in words and statements what is overtly or covertly intended to be communicated; language alone brings beings as beings into the open for the first time. Where there is no language, as in the Being of stone, plant, and animal, there is also no openness of beings, and consequently no openness of nonbeing and of the empty.

Language, by naming beings for the first time, first bring beings to word and to appearance. Only this naming nominates beings *to* their Being *from out of* their Being. Such saying is a projecting of clearing, in which announcement is made of what it is that beings come into the open *as*. Projecting is the release of a throw by which unconcealment infuses itself into beings as such. This projective announcement forthwith becomes a renunciation of all the dim confusion in which a being veils and withdraws itself.

Projective saying is poetry: the saying of world and earth, the saying of the arena of their strife and thus of the place of all nearness and remoteness of the gods. Poetry is the saying of the unconcealment of beings. Actual language at any given moment is the happening of this saying, in which a people's world historically arises for it and the earth is preserved as that which remains closed. Projective saying is saying which, in preparing the sayable, simultaneously

brings the unsayable as such into a world. In such saying, the concepts of a historical people's essence, i.e., of its belonging to world history, are preformed for that people.

Poetry is thought of here in so broad a sense and at the same time in such intimate essential unity with language and word, that we must leave open whether art in all its modes, from architecture to poesy, exhausts the essence of poetry.

Language itself is poetry in the essential sense. But since language is the happening in which beings first disclose themselves to man each time as beings, poesy – or poetry in the narrower sense – is the most original form of poetry in the essential sense. Language is not poetry because it is the primal poesy; rather, poesy propriates in language because language preserves the original essence of poetry. Building and plastic creation, on the other hand, always happen already, and happen only, in the open region of saying and naming. It is the open region that pervades and guides them. But for this very reason they remain their own ways and modes in which truth directs itself into work. They are an ever special poetizing within the clearing of beings which has already happened unnoticed in language.

Art, as the setting-into-work of truth, is poetry. Not only the creation of the work is poetic, but equally poetic, though in its own way, is the preserving of the work; for a work is in actual effect as a work only when we remove ourselves from our commonplace routine and move into what is disclosed by the work, so as to bring our own essence itself to take a stand in the truth of beings.

The essence of art is poetry. The essence of poetry, in turn, is the founding of truth. We understand founding here in a triple sense: founding as bestowing, founding as grounding, and founding as beginning. Founding, however, is actual only in preserving. Thus to each mode of founding there corresponds a mode of preserving. We can do no more now than to present this structure of the essence of art in a few strokes, and even this only to the extent that the earlier characterization of the essence of the work offers an initial hint.

The setting-into-work of truth thrusts up the awesome and at the same time thrusts down the ordinary and what we believe to be such. The truth that discloses itself in the work can never be proved or derived from what went before. What went before is refuted in its exclusive actuality by the work. What art founds can therefore never be compensated and made up for by what is already at hand and available. Founding is an overflow, a bestowal.

The poetic projection of truth that sets itself into work as figure is also never carried out in the direction of an indeterminate void. Rather, in the work, truth is thrown toward the coming preservers, that is, toward a historical group of human beings. What is thus cast forth is, however, never an arbitrary demand. Truly poetic projection is the opening up of that into which human being as historical is already cast. This is the earth and, for a historical people, its earth, the self-secluding ground on which it rests together with everything that it already is, though still hidden from itself. But this is also its world, which prevails in virtue of the relation of human being to the unconcealment of Being. For this reason, everything with which man is endowed must, in the projection, be drawn up from the closed ground and expressly set upon this ground. In this way the ground is first grounded as the bearing ground.

All creation, because it is such a drawing-up, is a drawing, as of water from a spring. Modern subjectivism, to be sure, immediately misinterprets creation, taking it as the sovereign subject's performance of genius. The founding of truth is a founding not only in the sense of free bestowal, but at the same time foundation in the sense of this ground-laying grounding. Poetic projection comes from nothing in this respect, that it never takes its gift from the ordinary and traditional. Yet it never comes from nothing in that what is projected by it is only the withheld determination of historical Dasein itself.

Bestowing and grounding have in themselves the unmediated character of what we call a beginning. Yet this unmediated character of a beginning, the peculiarity of a leap out of the

unmediable, does not exclude but rather includes the fact that the beginning prepares itself for the longest time and wholly inconspicuously. A genuine beginning, as a leap, is always a head start, in which everything to come is already leaped over, even if as something still veiled. The beginning already contains the end latent within itself. A genuine beginning, however, has nothing of the neophyte character of the primitive. The primitive, because it lacks the bestowing, grounding leap and head start, is always futureless. It is not capable of releasing anything more from itself because it contains nothing more than that in which it is caught.

A beginning, on the contrary, always contains the undisclosed abundance of the awesome, which means that it also contains strife with the familiar and ordinary. Art as poetry is founding, in the third sense of instigation of the strife of truth: founding as beginning. Always when beings as a whole, as beings themselves, demand a grounding in openness, art attains to its historical essence as foundation. This foundation happened in the West for the first time in Greece. What was in the future to be called Being was set into work, setting the standard. The realm of beings thus opened up was then transformed into a being in the sense of God's creation. This happened in the Middle Ages. This kind of being was again transformed at the beginning and during the course of the modern age. Beings became objects that could be controlled and penetrated by calculation. At each time a new and essential world irrupted. At each time the openness of beings had to be established in beings themselves by the fixing in place of truth in figure. At each time there happened unconcealment of beings. Unconcealment sets itself into work, a setting which is accomplished by art.

Whenever art happens – that is, whenever there is a beginning – a thrust enters history; history either begins or starts over again. History here means not a sequence in time of events, of whatever sort, however important. History is the transporting of a people into its appointed task as entry into that people's endowment.

Art is the setting-into-work of truth. In this proposition an essential ambiguity lies hidden, in which truth is at once the subject and the object of the setting. But subject and object are unsuitable names here. They keep us from thinking precisely this ambiguous essence, a task that no longer belongs to the present consideration. Art is historical, and as historical it is the creative preserving of truth in the work. Art happens as poetry. Poetry is founding in the triple sense of bestowing, grounding, and beginning. Art, as founding, is essentially historical. This means not simply that art has a history in the extrinsic sense that in the course of time it, too, appears along with many other things, and in the process changes and passes away and offers changing aspects for historiology. Art is history in the essential sense that it grounds history.

Art lets truth originate. Art, founding preserving, is the spring that leaps to the truth of beings in the work. To originate something by a leap, to bring something into being from out of its essential source in a founding leap – this is what the word 'origin' [*Ursprung*, literally, primal leap] means.

The origin of the work of art – that is, the origin of both the creators and the preservers, which is to say of a people's historical existence – is art. This is so because art is in its essence an origin: a distinctive way in which truth comes into being, that is, becomes historical.

We inquire into the essence of art. Why do we inquire in this way? We inquire in this way in order to be able to ask more properly whether art is or is not an origin in our historical existence, whether and under what conditions it can and must be an origin.

Such reflection cannot force art and its coming-to-be. But this reflective knowledge is the preliminary and therefore indispensable preparation for the becoming of art. Only such knowledge prepares its space for art, their way for the creators, their location for the preservers.

In such knowledge, which can only grow slowly, the question is decided whether art can be an origin and then must be a forward spring, or whether it is to remain a mere appendix and then can only be carried along as a routine cultural phenomenon.

Are we in our existence historically at the origin? Do we know, which means do we give heed to, the essence of the origin? Or, in our relation to art, do we still merely make appeal to a cultivated acquaintance with the past?

For this either-or and its decision there is an infallible sign. Hölderlin, the poet – whose work still confronts the Germans as a test to be stood – named it in saying:

> *Schwer verlässt*
> *was nahe dem Ursprung wohnet, den Ort.*
> Reluctantly
> that which dwells near its origin abandons the site.
>
> 'The Journey,' verses 18–19

Epilogue

The foregoing reflections are concerned with the riddle of art, the riddle that art itself is. They are far from claiming to solve the riddle. The task is to see the riddle.

Almost from the time when specialized thinking about art and the artist began, this thought was called aesthetic. Aesthetics takes the work of art as an object, the object of *aisthēsis*, of sensuous apprehension in the wide sense. Today we call this apprehension lived experience. The way in which man experiences art is supposed to give information about its essence. Lived experience is the source that is standard not only for art appreciation and enjoyment but also for artistic creation. Everything is an experience. Yet perhaps lived experience is the element in which art dies. The dying occurs so slowly that it takes a few centuries.

To be sure, people speak of immortal works of art and of art as an eternal value. Speaking this way means using that language which does not trouble with precision in all essential matters, for fear that in the end to be precise would call for – thinking. And is there any greater anxiety today than that in the face of thinking? Does this talk about immortal works and the eternal value of art have any content or substance? Or are these merely the half-baked clichés of an age when great art, together with its essence, has departed from among human beings?

In the most comprehensive reflection on the essence of art that the West possesses – comprehensive because it stems from metaphysics – namely, Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*, the following propositions occur:

> Art no longer counts for us as the highest manner in which truth obtains existence for itself.
>
> One may well hope that art will continue to advance and perfect itself, but its form has ceased to be the highest need of spirit.
>
> In all these relationships art is and remains for us, on the side of its highest vocation, something past.[6]

The judgment that Hegel passes in these statements cannot be evaded by pointing out that since Hegel's lectures on aesthetics were given for the last time during the winter of 1828–29 at the University of Berlin we have seen the rise of many new artworks and new art movements. Hegel never meant to deny this possibility. But the question remains: Is art still an essential and necessary way in which that truth happens which is decisive for our historical existence, or is art no longer of this character? If, however, it is such no longer, then there remains the question as to why this is so. The truth of Hegel's judgment has not yet been decided; for behind this verdict there stands Western thought since the Greeks. Such thought corresponds to a truth of beings

that has already happened. Decision upon the judgment will be made, when it is made, from and about this truth of beings. Until then the judgment remains in force. But for that very reason the question is necessary as to whether the truth that the judgment declares is final and conclusive, and what follows if it is.

Such questions, which solicit us more or less definitely, can be asked only after we have first taken into consideration the essence of art. We attempt to take a few steps by posing the question of the origin of the artwork. The problem is to bring to view the work-character of the work. What the word 'origin' here means is thought by way of the essence of truth.

The truth of which we have spoken does not coincide with that which is generally recognized under the name and assigned to cognition and science as a quality, in order to distinguish from it the beautiful and the good, which function as names for the values of nontheoretical activities.

Truth is the unconcealment of beings as beings. Truth is the truth of Being. Beauty does not occur apart from this truth. When truth sets itself into the work, it appears. Appearance – as this being of truth in the work and as work – is beauty. Thus the beautiful belongs to truth's propriative event. It does not exist merely relative to pleasure and purely as its object. The beautiful does lie in form, but only because the *forma* once took its light from Being as the beingness of beings. Being at that time was appropriated as *eidos*. The *idea* fits itself into the *morphē*. The *synolon*, the unitary whole of *morphē* and *hylē*, namely the *ergon*, *is* in the manner of *energeia*. This mode of presence becomes the *actualitas* of the *ens actu*. The *actualitas* becomes reality. Actuality becomes objectivity. Objectivity becomes lived experience. In the way in which, for the world determined by the West, beings are as the actual, there is concealed a peculiar confluence of beauty with truth. The history of the essence of Western art corresponds to the change in the essence of truth. Western art is no more intelligible in terms of beauty taken for itself than it is in terms of lived experience, supposing that the metaphysical concept of art reaches into the essence of art.

Addendum

On pages 109 and 112 an essential difficulty will force itself on the attentive reader: it looks as if the remarks about the 'fixing in place of truth' and the 'letting happen of the advent of truth' could never be brought into accord. For 'fixing in place' implies a willing that blocks and thus prevents the advent of truth. In *letting*-happen on the other hand, there is manifested a compliance and thus, as it were, a nonwilling, that clears the way for the advent of truth.

The difficulty is resolved if we understand fixing in place in the sense intended throughout the entire text of the essay, above all in the key specification '*setting*-into-work.' Also correlated with 'to place' and 'to set' is 'to lay'; all three meanings are still intended jointly by the Latin *ponere*.

We must think 'to place' in the sense of *thesis*. Thus on page 108 the statement is made, 'Setting and taking possession are here everywhere (!) thought on the basis of the Greek sense of *thesis*, which means a setting up in the unconcealed.' The Greek 'setting' means placing, as for instance, letting a statue be set up. It means laying, laying down an oblation. Placing and laying have the sense of bringing *here* into the unconcealed, bringing *forth* into what is present, that is, letting lie forth. Setting and placing here never mean the modern concept of commandeering things to be placed over against the self (the ego-subject). The standing of the statue (i.e., the presencing of the radiance facing us) is different from the standing of what stands over against us in the sense of the object. 'Standing' (See p. 96) is constancy of shining. By contrast, thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis in the dialectic of Kant and German Idealism mean a placing or putting within the sphere of subjectivity of consciousness. Accordingly, Hegel – correctly in terms of his position – interpreted the Greek *thesis* in the sense of the immediate positing of the object. Setting in this sense, therefore, is for him still untrue, because it is not yet mediated by antithesis and synthesis. (See 'Hegel und die Griechen' in the *Festschrift* for H. G. Gadamer, 1960.)[7]

But if, in the context of our essay on the work of art, we keep in mind the Greek sense of *thesis* – to let lie forth in its shining and presencing – then the 'fix' in 'fix in place' can never have the sense of rigid, motionless, and secure.

'Fixed' means outlined, admitted into the boundary (*peras*), brought into the outline (See p. 109). The boundary in the Greek sense does not block off; rather, being itself brought forth, it first brings to its radiance what is present. Boundary sets free into the unconcealed; by its contour in the Greek light the mountain stands in its towering and repose. The boundary that fixes and consolidates is in this repose – repose in the fullness of motion. All this holds of the work in the Greek sense of *ergon*; this work's 'Being' is *energeia*, which gathers infinitely more movement within itself than do the modern 'energies.'

Thus the 'fixing in place' of truth, rightly understood, can never run counter to the 'letting happen.' For one thing, this 'letting' is nothing passive but a doing in the highest degree (see 'Wissenschaft und Besinnung' in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 49)[8] in the sense of *thesis*, a 'working' and 'willing' that in the present essay (pp. 110–11) is characterized as the 'existing human being's ecstatic entry into the unconcealment of Being.' For another thing, the 'happen' in the letting happen of truth is the movement that prevails in the clearing *and* concealing, or more precisely in their union, that is to say, the movement of the clearing of self-concealment as such, from which in turn all self-clearing stems. What is more, this 'movement' even requires a fixing in place in the sense of a bringing forth, where the bringing is to be understood in the sense given it on page 108, in that the creative bringing forth 'is rather a receiving and an incorporating of a relation to unconcealment.'

In accordance with what has so far been explained, the meaning of the noun *Ge-Stell* [enframing] used on page 109, is thus defined: the gathering of the bringing-forth, of the letting-come-forth-here into the rift-design as bounding outline (*peras*). The Greek sense of *morphē* as *Gestalt* is made clear by *Ge-Stell* so understood. Now, the word *Ge-Stell*, which we used in later writings as the explicit key expression for the essence of modern technology, was indeed conceived in reference to that broader sense of *Ge-Stell* (*not* in reference to such other senses as bookshelf or montage). That context is essential, because related to the destiny of Being. Enframing, as the essence of modern technology, derives from the Greek way of experiencing letting-lie-forth, *logos*, from the Greek *poiēsis* and *thesis*. In setting up the frame – which now means in commandeering [*Herausfordern*] everything into assured availability – there sounds the claim of the *ratio reddenda*, i.e., of the *logon didonai* [the reasons, grounds, or accounts to be rendered], but in such a way that today this claim that is made in enframing takes control of the absolute, and the process of representation [*Vor-stellen*, literally, putting forth], on the basis of the Greek sense of apprehending, devotes itself to securing and fixing in place.

When we hear the words 'fix in place' and 'enframing' in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', we must, on the one hand, put out of mind the modern meaning of placing or enframing, and yet at the same time we must not fail to note that, and in what way, the Being that defines the modern period – Being as enframing – stems from the Western destiny of Being and has not been thought *up* by philosophers but rather thought *to* thinkers (see *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, pp. 28 and 49).[9]

It is still our burden to discuss the specifications given briefly on pages 107–8 about the 'establishing' and 'self-establishing of truth in beings.' Here again we must avoid understanding 'establish' [*einrichten*] in the modern sense and in the manner of the lecture on technology as 'organize' and 'finish or complete.' Rather, 'establishing' recalls the 'impulse of truth toward the work,' mentioned on page 108, the impulse that, in the midst of beings, truth should itself come to be in the manner of work, should itself come to be as being.

If we recollect how truth as unconcealment of beings means nothing but the presencing of beings as such, that is, *Being* – see page 113 – then talk about the self-establishing of truth, that is, of Being, in beings, touches on the problem of the ontological difference (See *Identität und Differenz* [1957], pp. 37ff).[10] For this reason there is the note of caution on page 186 of 'The Origin of the Work of Art': 'In referring to this self-establishing of openness in the open

region, thinking touches on a sphere that cannot yet be explicated here.' The whole essay, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', deliberately yet tacitly moves on the path of the question of the essence of Being. Reflection on what *art* may be is completely and decidedly determined only in regard to the question of *Being*. Art is considered neither an area of cultural achievement nor an appearance of spirit; it belongs to the *propriative event* [Ereignis] by way of which the 'meaning of Being' (See *Being and Time*) can alone be defined. What art may be is one of the questions to which no answers are given in the essay. Whatever gives the impression of such an answer are directives for questioning. (See the first sentences of the Epilogue.)

Among these directives there are two *important hints*, on pages 112 and 115. In both places mention is made of an 'ambiguity.' On page 115 an 'essential ambiguity' is noted in regard to the definition of art as 'the setting-into-work of truth.' In this ambiguity, truth is 'subject' on the one hand and 'object' on the other. *Both* descriptions remain 'unsuitable.' If truth is the 'subject,' then the definition 'the setting-into-work of truth' means: 'truth's setting *itself* into work' (compare pages 112 and 96). Art is then conceived in terms of the propriative event. Being, however, is a call to man and is not without man. Accordingly, art is at the same time defined as the setting-into-work of truth, where truth *now* is 'object' and art is human creating and preserving.

Within the *human* relation to art there results the second ambiguity of the setting-into-work of truth, which on page 110 was called creation and preservation. According to pages 112 and 106 the art-*work* and the art*ist* rest 'simultaneously' in what goes on in art. In the rubric 'the setting-into-work of truth,' in which it remains undecided but decid*able* who does the setting or in what way it occurs, there is concealed *the relation of Being and human being*, a relation that is unsuitably conceived even in this version – a distressing difficulty, which has been clear to me since *Being and Time* and has since been expressed in a variety of versions (See, most recently, 'Zur Seinsfrage' and the present essay, p. 108, 'Only this much should be noted, that… .').

The problematic context that prevails here then comes together at the proper place in the discussion, where the essence of language and of poetry is touched on, all this again only in regard to the belonging together of Being and saying.

There remains the unavoidable quandary that the reader, who naturally comes to the essay from without, will refrain at first and for a long time from perceiving and interpreting the matters at issue here in terms of the reticent domain that is the source of what has to be thought. For the author himself, however, there remains the quandary of always having to speak in the language most opportune for each of the various stations on his way.

Translated by Albert Hofstadter

Notes

'The Origin of the Work of Art' appears *complete*, including the later 'Epilogue' and the 'Addendum' of 1956. The translation is by Albert Hofstadter (in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, New York: Harper & Row, 1971, pp. 17–87), with minor changes made by D.F. Krell in the second edition of his collection of Heidegger's *Basic Writings*, New York: Harper & Row, 1993. The German text for the translation is Martin Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, ed. H.G. Gadamer (Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 1960). An error on p. 9 of the German text has been silently corrected. In the footnotes, 'Ed.' refers to D.F. Krell.

1 In German *der Riss* is a crack, tear, laceration, cleft, or rift; but it is also a plan or design in drawing. The verb *reissen* from which it derives is cognate with the English word *writing*. *Der Riss* is incised or inscribed as a rune or letter. Heidegger here employs a series of words (*Abriss*, *Aufriss*, *Umriss*, and especially *Grundriss*) to suggest that the rift of world and earth releases a sketch, outline, profile, blueprint, or ground plan. The rift is writ. – Ed.

2 The word for resoluteness, *Entschlossenheit*, if taken literally, would mean 'unclosedness'. – Tr.
3 This is precisely the complaint that Heidegger levels against Nietzsche's notion of will to power as art – not in the 1936–37 lecture course on Nietzsche but in notes sketched during the year 1939. To some extent the whole of the present essay may be viewed as a response to the Nietzschean *Wille zur Macht als Kunst*. – Ed.
4 '*Reissen heisst hier Herausholen des Risses und den Riss reissen mit der Reissfeder auf dem Reissbrett.*'
5 Thrownness, *Geworfenheit*, is understood in *Being and Time* as an existential characteristic of Dasein, human being, its thatness, its 'that it is', and it refers to the facticity of human being's being handed over to itself, its being on its own responsibility; as long as human being is what it is, it is thrown, cast, *im Wurf*. Projection, *Entwurf*, on the other hand, is a second existential character of human being, referring to its driving forward toward its own possibility of being. It takes the form of understanding, which the author speaks of as the mode of being of human being in which human being *is* in its possibilities *as* possibilities. It is not the mere having of a preconceived plan, but is the projecting of possibility in human being that occurs antecedently to all plans and makes planning possible. Human being is both thrown and projected; it is a 'thrown project', a factical directedness toward possibilities of being. – Tr.
6 In the original pagination of the *Vorlesungen*, which is repeated in the Jubiläum edition edited by H. Glockner (Stuttgart: Frommanns Verlag, 1953), these passages occur at X, 1, 134; 135; 16. In the 'Theorie Werkausgabe' (Frankfurt-am-Main: Suhrkamp, 1970) they are to be found in vol. 13, 141, 142, and 25. – Ed.
7 The reference was added to the Reclam edition in 1960. The essay appears also in Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt-am-Main: V. Klostermann, 1967), pp. 255–72. – Ed.
8 The reference is to a discussion of the German *Tun*, doing, which points to the core of its meaning as a laying forth, placing here, bringing here, and bringing forth – 'working', in the sense either of something bringing itself forth out of itself into presence or of man performing the bringing here and bringing forth of something. Both are ways in which something that is present presences. – Tr.
9 The reference to p. 49 is to the conception of doing, as given in the previous note. The passage on p. 28 of *Vorträge und Aufsätze* appears in Heidegger's *Basic Writings*, ed. D.F. Krell, pp. 325–26. – Tr.
10 See Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 50ff., 116ff. – Tr.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Martin Heidegger in English

History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena (1925), trans. T. Kisiel, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.
Basic Problems of Phenomenology (1927), trans. A. Hofstadter, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.
Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason' (1927–28), trans. P. Emad and K. Maly, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.
Being and Time (1928), trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
Being and Time (1928), trans. J. Stambaugh, New York: State University of New York, 1996.
Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics (1929), trans. J.S. Churchill, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962.
Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics (1929), trans. R. Taft, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.
The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Allegory and 'Theaetetus' (1931–32), trans. T. Sadler, London: Continuum, 2002.
An Introduction to Metaphysics (1935), trans. R. Manheim, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.
An Introduction to Metaphysics (1935), trans. G. Fried and R. Polt, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art (1936–37), trans. D.F. Krell, New York: Harper and Row, 1979.
Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning) (1936–38), trans. P. Emad and K. Maly, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.
The End of Philosophy (1941), trans. J. Stambaugh, New York: Harper and Row, 1973.
Off the Beaten Path (1934–46), eds and trans. J. Young and K. Haynes, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
What is Called Thinking? (1954), trans. F.D. Wieck and J.G. Gray, New York: Harper and Row, 1968.
The Question Concerning Technology (1955), trans. W. Lovitt, New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
Identity and Difference (1957), trans. J. Stambaugh, New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

The Principle of Reason (1957), trans. R. Lilly, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
On the Way to Language (1953–59), trans. P.D. Hertz and J. Stambaugh, New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
What is a Thing? (1962), trans. W.B. Barton, Jr. and V. Deutsch, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1967.
Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry (1930s–70s), trans. K. Hoeller, New York: Humanity Books, 2000.
Zollikon Seminars (1947–71), ed. M. Boss, trans. F. Mayr and R. Askay, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001.
Discourse on Thinking, trans. J. Anderson and E. Freund, New York: Harper and Row, 1966.
Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. A. Hofstadter, New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
Basic Writings, ed. D.F. Krell, New York: Harper and Row, 1993.
Pathmarks, ed. W. McNeill, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
The Heidegger Reader, ed. G. Figal, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009.

Further reading

For concise introductions to Heidegger's philosophy, see Inwood (2000) and Steiner (1978). Fuller introductions, with commentaries on specific texts, are provided by Blattner (2006), Braver (2009), Dreyfus (1991), Figal (2009), Mulhall (2005), Wrathall (2006), and Young (2002). Wider examinations of the nature and implications of Heidegger's thought are conducted by Friedman (2000), Guignon (1983, 1993), Lafont (2000), Olafson (1987), Rapaport (1989), Richardson (1986), and Rorty (1991). Examinations of Heidegger's concept of truth are given by Dahlstrom (2001), Tugendhat (1996), and Wrathall (1999), with Derrida (1987) and Sallis (1995) subjecting Heidegger on truth to a deconstructive reading.

For accounts of Heidegger's aesthetics, consider works by Bartky (1981), Bernasconi (1992, 1998, 1999), Dreyfus (2005), Gover (2008), Guignon (2003), Harries (1998), Kockelmans (1985), Mitchell (2010), Scheibler (2001), Singh (1990), Taminiaux (1993), Thomson (2010), and Young (2001). Studies focusing on the relation between art and truth are offered by Brogan (1984), Guignon (1989), Schufreider (1980), and Vattimo (2008). For responses to Heidegger's treatment of Van Gogh's 'peasant shoes' painting, and the Heidegger–Schapiro exchange, see Babich (2003), Craven (1994, 1997), Derrida (1987), Payne (1992), and Schapiro (1994a, 1994b). Heidegger's emphasis on poetry is considered by Bruzina (1973), Casenave (1982), Cazeaux (2007), Ricoeur (1978), and Wright (1993, 1998). Heidegger's Nazism is addressed by Collins (2000), Hodge (1995), Lyotard (1990), Wolin (1993), and Young (1998).

B.E. Babich, 'From Van Gogh's museum to the temple at Bassae: Heidegger's truth of art and Schapiro's art history', *Culture, Theory & Critique*, 2003, vol. 44, pp. 151–69.
S. Bartky, 'Heidegger's philosophy of art', in T. Sheehan (ed.), *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1981, pp. 257–74.
R. Bernasconi, 'Martin Heidegger', in D. Cooper (ed.), *A Companion to Aesthetics*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, pp. 188–91.
———, 'Heidegger's displacement of the concept of art', in M. Kelly (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, vol. 2, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 377–80.
———, 'The greatness of the work of art', in J. Risser (ed.), *Heidegger Toward the Turn: Essays on the Work of the 1930s*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999, pp. 95–118.
W. Blattner, *Heidegger's 'Being and Time'*, London: Continuum, 2006.
L. Braver, *Heidegger's Later Writings*, London: Continuum, 2009.
W. Brogan, 'The battle between art and truth', *Philosophy Today*, 1984, vol. 28, pp. 349–57.
R. Bruzina, 'Heidegger on metaphor and philosophy', *Cultural Hermeneutics*, 1973, vol. 1, pp. 305–24.
G. Casenave, 'Heidegger and metaphor', *Philosophy Today*, 1982, vol. 26, pp. 140–47.
C. Cazeaux, *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy: From Kant to Derrida*, New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 150–98.
J. Collins, *Heidegger and the Nazis*, Cambridge: Icon, 2000.
D. Craven, 'Meyer Schapiro, Karl Korsch, and the emergence of critical theory', *The Oxford Art Journal*, 1994, vol. 17, pp. 42–54.
———, 'A series of interviews: Meyer Schapiro and Lillian Milgram Schapiro with David Craven', *Res*, 1997, vol. 31, pp. 151–68.
D.O. Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Concept of Truth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
J. Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. G. Bennington and I. McLeod, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
H.L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's 'Being and Time', Division I*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991.

———, 'Heidegger's ontology of art', in H.L. Dreyfus and M.A. Wrathall (eds), *A Companion to Heidegger*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, pp. 407–19.
G. Figal (ed.), *The Heidegger Reader*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009.
M. Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger*, Chicago: Open Court, 2000.
K. Gover, 'The overlooked work of art in "The origin of the work of art"', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 2008, vol. 48, pp. 143–54.
C. Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983.
———, 'Truth as disclosure: art, language, history', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 1989, vol. 28, pp. 105–20.
——— (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
———, 'Meaning in the work of art: a hermeneutic perspective', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 2003, vol. 27, pp. 25–44.
K. Harries, 'Heidegger's confrontation with aesthetics', in M. Kelly (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, vol. 2, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 375–77.
J. Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics*, London: Routledge, 1995.
M. Inwood, *Heidegger: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
J. Kockelmans, *Heidegger on Art and Art Works*, Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1985.
C. Lafont, *Heidegger, Language and World-Disclosure*, trans. G. Harman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
J.-F. Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the Jews'*, trans. A. Michel and M. Roberts, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990.
A.J. Mitchell, *Heidegger Among the Sculptors*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.
S. Mulhall, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and 'Being and Time'*, London: Routledge, 2005.
F.A. Olafson, *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.
M. Payne, 'Derrida, Heidegger, and Van Gogh's "old shoes"', *Textual Practice*, 1992, vol. 6, pp. 87–100.
H. Rapaport, *Heidegger and Derrida: Reflections on Time and Language*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989.
J. Richardson, *Existential Epistemology: A Heideggerian Critique of the Cartesian Project*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.
P. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. R. Czerny, K. McLaughlin, and J. Costello, London: Routledge, 1978, pp. 283–84.
R. Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers Volume 2*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
J. Sallis, *Double Truth*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.
M. Schapiro, 'The still life as a personal object – a note on Heidegger and van Gogh', in M. Schapiro, *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society*, New York: George Braziller, 1994, pp. 135–42.
———, 'Further notes on Heidegger and van Gogh', in M. Schapiro, *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society*, New York: George Braziller, 1994, pp. 143–52.
I. Scheibler, 'Art as festival in Heidegger and Gadamer', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 2001, vol. 9, pp. 151–75.
G. Schufreider, 'Art and the problem of truth', *Man and World*, 1980, vol. 13, pp. 53–80.
R.R. Singh, 'Heidegger and the world in an artwork', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1990, vol. 48, pp. 215–22.
G. Steiner, *Heidegger*, London: Fontana, 1978.
J. Taminiaux, 'The origin of "The origin of the work of art"', in J. Sallis (ed.), *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
I. Thomson, 'Heidegger's aesthetics', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2010. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger-aesthetics/ (accessed 4 April 2010).
E. Tugendhat, 'Heidegger's idea of truth', in C. Macann (ed.), *Critical Heidegger*, London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 227–40.
G. Vattimo, *Art's Claim to Truth*, ed. S. Zabala, trans. L. D'Isanto, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
R. Wolin (ed.), *The Heidegger Controversy*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993.
M.A. Wrathall, 'Heidegger and truth as correspondence', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 1999, vol. 7, pp. 69–88.
———, *How to Read Heidegger*, New York: Norton, 2006.
K. Wright, 'Heidegger's Hölderlin and the mo(u)rning of history', *Philosophy Today*, 1993, vol. 37, pp. 423–35.
———, 'Heidegger and Hölderlin', in M. Kelly (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, vol. 2, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 383–86.
J. Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
———, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
———, *Heidegger's Later Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Chapter 5

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

INTRODUCTION

Heidegger, Sartre, Levinas, and Dufrenne all consider art and language in the context of ontology. Instead of being forms of expression which merely articulate a particular view of the world, art and language are regarded by these philosophers as operations which can reveal or impinge upon the shape that human being and action take in the world. For Sartre (1905–80) and Levinas, the relationship *between* art and language is important. They examine how the form of an artwork – principally, whether it is phenomenal or verbal – affects its capacity to refer beyond itself and stimulate the viewer's sense of her place in a world among others.

Through his plays, novels, and philosophical texts, Jean-Paul Sartre displays the central ideas of existentialism. For the existentialist, identity, a sense of who we are and our place in the world, is constructed through action and only has meaning when regarded as something dynamic – a propensity to act or to apply oneself. Sartre builds upon nihilism and, following Nietzsche, rejects the belief that human beings derive their identity and motivation from internal, substantive essences, e.g. a soul or a continuous self. Ontologies, such as Platonism and Cartesianism, which seek to explain identity in terms of abiding, essential qualities, Sartre argues, always leave us with the problem of how universal principles apply to particular situations. In response, Sartre radically rethinks the relation between concept and identity to show that it is only through active transformation of or engagement with the world that people and things acquire meanings.

Sartre, like Heidegger, presents subjective experience in the form of a question, but this time the question is 'how should one act?' or 'how should this experience lead to the next?'. In his major work, *Being and Nothingness* (1943), Sartre defines the self as a 'nothingness'. This has two meanings: (1) the self is *not a thing*, it is not something which can be captured and defined in the way that a pen or an inkwell can, and, more importantly, (2) the self, he claims, is the absence or gap between one appearance and the next. This gap is essentially a form of questioning through time, formed by the structure of experience. An object does not disclose all its possible appearances in one moment. Experience is successive: a continuum in which aspects appear and disappear, in which appearances are revealed and then withdrawn. Impressions move on: this object is not present to me now in exactly the same way it was a moment ago. The next moment always appears as if it were the answer to a question: it might confirm or confound our expectations, or surprise us, or give a negative reply. What is certain is that the next moment will not be the same as before, for even to judge it 'the same' is to give it a different character. It is only in consciousness that the impression of something not being the case can take place, e.g. expecting to find thirty pounds in my wallet but finding only twenty, or waiting in a café for a friend who never turns up. It is the possibility of negation, of being surprised by appearances, of having one's expectations confounded, which disengages consciousness

from the brute causal order of the world. Because this rupture in the causal order of the world *is* the structure of consciousness for Sartre, there can never be a moment when consciousness is identical with a self which can influence or determine its actions. Consciousness is being *for-itself* because it can never be identical with a content, cause, or thing. There is nothing – no inner core of being – which can compel me to adopt a particular form of conduct.

As there are no metaphysical essences in Sartre's ontology to organize and give shape to experience, order has to be made. We define ourselves and our lives by the actions we take. Experience itself, Sartre maintains, is an active process, a series of negotiations between mind and reality. Writing is a form of action for Sartre. Not only does it have the same structure as consciousness, but it also changes and gives shape to experience. Putting an event or an object 'into words' gives definition and specificity to what would otherwise just pass us by as the flow of experience. From all that could be said at any one moment, one slice across phenomena is made – 'the root is black' – and the root is carved out as the object of our attention. Consciousness suddenly becomes aware of itself as that which is confronting this object. Producing a description brings the recognition that qualities are present in the root which our words do not cover and, in fact, distances the object further by suggesting connections with other items, e.g. other black things. Sartre's novel *Nausea* (1938) is an account of a writer's coming to terms with the realization that words do not bring us closer to things but rather exacerbate the questioning sense of absence which defines the human being's relationship with reality.

Sartre has particular views on just how writing gives shape and form to experience. In 'What is Writing?' (1947), he argues that, of all the arts, prose is the only form of representation which returns us to the world. For the prose writer, he claims, words are 'transparent'. This is an unfortunate metaphor, since it is associated historically with the philosophical ideal of passing through concepts to things in themselves. But this is not Sartre's meaning. The prose writer makes her words transparent so that her readers 'may assume full responsibility before the object which has been thus laid bare'. Prose 'utilizes' words as signs: 'the ambiguity of the sign', he suggests, 'implies that one can penetrate it at will like a pane of glass and pursue the thing signified, or turn one's gaze towards its *reality* and consider it as an object'.[1] In contrast, the forms of painting, sculpture, music, and poetry exist as *things* and, as such, have a density of their own which 'withdraws' the audience from the human condition. We are dealing with an ontology of action. Shape has to be given to experience not in a way which isolates objects and distances us from them but in a way which makes them available to us. Prose, for Sartre, organizes experience in a manner which does not draw attention to itself as an external or extra-experiential form of organization.

Note

1 Sartre's use of the 'pane of glass' simile for writing comes one year after George Orwell's declaration in 1946, motivated by similar political reasons, that 'good prose is like a window pane'. See G. Orwell, 'Why I write', in *Why I Write*, London: Penguin, 2004, p. 10. Online. Available HTTP: http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/wiw/english/e_wiw (accessed 21 June 2010).

WHAT IS WRITING?

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

No, we do not want to 'commit' painting, sculpture, and music 'too', or at least not in the same way.[1] And why would we want to? When a writer of past centuries expressed an opinion about his craft, was he immediately asked to apply it to the other arts? But today it's the thing to 'talk painting' in the jargon of the musician or the literary man and to 'talk literature' in the jargon of the painter, as if at bottom there were only one art which expressed itself indifferently in one or the other of these languages, like the Spinozistic substance which is adequately reflected by each of its attributes.

Doubtless, one could find at the origin of every artistic calling a certain undifferentiated choice which circumstances, education, and contact with the world particularized only later. Besides, there is no doubt that the arts of a period mutually influence each other and are conditioned by the same social factors. But those who want to expose the absurdity of a literary theory by showing that it is inapplicable to music must first prove that the arts are parallel.

Now, there is no such parallelism. Here, as everywhere, it is not only the form which differentiates, but the matter as well. And it is one thing to work with colour and sound, and another to express oneself by means of words. Notes, colours, and forms are not signs. They refer to nothing exterior to themselves. To be sure, it is quite impossible to reduce them strictly to themselves, and the idea of a pure sound, for example, is an abstraction. As Merleau-Ponty has pointed out in *The Phenomenology of Perception*, there is no quality of sensation so bare that it is not penetrated with significance. But the dim little meaning which dwells within it, a light joy, a timid sadness, remains immanent or trembles about it like a heat mist; it *is* colour or sound. Who can distinguish the green apple from its tart gaiety? And aren't we already saying too much in naming 'the tart gaiety of the green apple'? There is green, there is red, and that is all. They are things, they exist by themselves.

It is true that one might, by convention, confer the value of signs upon them. Thus, we talk of the language of flowers. But, if after the agreement, white roses signify 'fidelity' to me, the fact is that I have stopped seeing them as roses. My attention cuts through them to aim beyond them at this abstract virtue. I forget them. I no longer pay attention to their mossy abundance, to their sweet stagnant odour. I have not even perceived them. That means that I have not behaved like an artist. For the artist, the colour, the bouquet, the tinkling of the spoon on the saucer, are *things*, in the highest degree. He stops at the quality of the sound or the form. He returns to it constantly and is enchanted with it. It is this colour-object that he is going to transfer to his canvas, and the only modification he will make it undergo is that he will transform it into an *imaginary* object. He is therefore as far as he can be from considering colours and signs as a *language*.[2]

What is valid for the elements of artistic creation is also valid for their combinations. The painter does not want to draw signs on his canvas, he wants to create a thing.[3] And if he puts together red, yellow, and green, there is no reason why this collection of colours should have a definable significance, that is, should refer particularly to another object. Doubtless the composition is also inhabited by a soul, and since there must have been motives, even hidden ones, for the painter to have chosen yellow rather than violet, it may be asserted that the objects thus created reflect his deepest tendencies. However, they never express his anger, his anguish, or his joy as do words or the expression of the face; they are impregnated with these emotions; and in order for them to have crept into these colours, which by themselves already had something like a meaning, his emotions get mixed up and grow obscure. Nobody can quite recognize them there.

Tintoretto did not choose that yellow rift in the sky above Golgotha to *signify* anguish or to *provoke* it. It is anguish and yellow sky at the same time. Not sky of anguish or anguished sky; it is an anguish become thing, an anguish which has turned into yellow rift of sky, and which thereby is submerged and impasted by the qualities peculiar to things, by their impermeability, their extension,

their blind permanence, their externality, and that infinity of relations which they maintain with other things. That is, it is no longer *readable*. It is like an immense and vain effort, forever arrested half-way between sky and earth, to express what their nature keeps them from expressing.

Similarly, the significance of a melody – if one can still speak of significance – is nothing outside the melody itself, unlike ideas, which can be adequately rendered in several ways. Call it joyous or sad. It will always be over and above anything you can say about it. Not because its passions, which are perhaps at the origin of the invented theme, have, by being incorporated into notes, undergone a transubstantiation and a transmutation. A cry of grief is a sign of the grief which provokes it, but a song of grief is both grief itself and something other than grief. Or, if one wishes to adopt the existentialist vocabulary, it is a grief which does not *exist* any more, which *is*. But, you will say, suppose the painter portrays houses? That's just it. He *makes* them, that is, he creates an imaginary house on the canvas and not a sign of a house. And the house which thus appears preserves all the ambiguity of real houses.

The writer can guide you and, if he describes a hovel, make it seem the symbol of social injustice and provoke your indignation. The painter is mute. He presents you with *a* hovel, that's all. You are free to see in it what you like. That attic window will never be the symbol of misery; for that, it would have to be a sign, whereas it is a thing. The bad painter looks for the type. He paints the Arab, the Child, the Woman; the good one knows that neither the Arab nor the proletarian exists either in reality or on his canvas. He offers a workman, a certain workman. And what are we to think about a workman? An infinity of contradictory things. All thoughts and all feelings are there, adhering to the canvas in a state of profound undifferentiation. It is up to you to choose. Sometimes, high-minded artists try to move us. They paint long lines of workmen waiting in the snow to be hired, the emaciated faces of the unemployed, battlefields. They affect us no more than does Greuze with his *Prodigal Son*. And that masterpiece, *The Massacre of Guernica*, does anyone think that it won over a single heart to the Spanish cause? And yet something is said that can never quite be heard and that would take an infinity of words to express. And Picasso's long harlequins, ambiguous and eternal, haunted with inexplicable meaning, inseparable from their stooping leanness and their pale diamond-shaped tights, are emotion become flesh, emotion which the flesh has absorbed as the blotter absorbs ink, and emotion which is unrecognizable, lost, strange to itself, scattered to the four corners of space and yet present to itself.

I have no doubt that charity or anger can produce other objects, but they will likewise be swallowed up; they will lose their name; there will remain only things haunted by a mysterious soul. One does not paint meanings; one does not put them to music. Under these conditions, who would dare require that the painter or musician commit himself?

On the other hand, the writer deals with meanings. Still, a distinction must be made. The empire of signs is prose; poetry is on the side of painting, sculpture, and music. I am accused of detesting it; the proof, so they say, is that *Les Temps Modernes*[4] publishes very few poems. On the contrary, this is proof that we like it. To be convinced, all one need do is take a look at contemporary production. 'At least,' critics say triumphantly, 'you can't even dream of committing it.' Indeed. But why should I want to? Because it uses words as does prose? But it does not use them in the same way, and it does not even use them at all. I should rather say that it serves them. Poets are men who refuse to *utilize* language. Now, since the quest for truth takes place in and by language conceived as a certain kind of instrument, it is unnecessary to imagine that they aim to discern or expound the true. Nor do they dream of *naming* the world, and, this being the case, they name nothing at all, for naming implies a perpetual sacrifice of the name to the object named, or, as Hegel would say, the name is revealed as the inessential in the face of the thing which is essential. They do not speak, neither do they keep silent; it is something different. It has been said that they wanted to destroy the 'word' by monstrous couplings, but

this is false. For then they would have to be thrown into the midst of utilitarian language and would have had to try to retrieve words from it in odd little groups, as for example 'horse' and 'butter' by writing 'horses of butter'.[5]

Besides the fact that such an enterprise would require infinite time, it is not conceivable that one can keep oneself on the plane of the utilitarian project, consider words as instruments, and at the same time contemplate taking their instrumentality away from them. In fact, the poet has withdrawn from language-instrument in a single movement. Once and for all he has chosen the poetic attitude which considers words as things and not as signs. For the ambiguity of the sign implies that one can penetrate it at will like a pane of glass and pursue the thing signified, or turn one's gaze towards its *reality* and consider it as an object. The man who talks is beyond words and near the object, whereas the poet is on this side of them. For the former, they are domesticated; for the latter they are in the wild state. For the former, they are useful conventions, tools which gradually wear out and which one throws away when they are no longer serviceable; for the latter, they are natural things which sprout naturally upon the earth like grass and trees.

But if he dwells upon words, as does the painter with colours and the musician with sounds, that does not mean that they have lost all meaning in his eyes. Indeed, it is meaning alone which can give words their verbal unity. Without it they are frittered away into sounds and strokes of the pen. Only, it too becomes natural. It is no longer the goal which is always out of reach and which human transcendence is always aiming at, but a property of each term, analogous to the expression of a face, to the little sad or gay meaning of sounds and colours. Having flowed into the word, having been absorbed by its sonority or visual aspect, having been thickened and defaced, it too is a thing, uncreated and eternal.

For the poet, language is a structure of the external world. The speaker is *in a situation* in language; he is invested with words. They are prolongations of his meanings, his pincers, his antennae, his spectacles. He manœuvres them from within; he feels them as if they were his body; he is surrounded by a verbal body which he is hardly aware of and which extends his action upon the world. The poet is outside language. He sees words inside out as if he did not share the human condition, and as if he were first meeting the word as a barrier as he comes towards men. Instead of first knowing things by their name, it seems that first he has a silent contact with them, since, turning towards that other species of thing which for him is the word, touching them, testing them, fingering them, he discovers in them a slight luminosity of their own and particular affinities with the earth, the sky, the water, and all created things.

Not knowing how to use them as a *sign* of an aspect of the world, he sees in the word the *image* of one of these aspects. And the verbal image he chooses for its resemblance to the willow tree or the ash tree is not necessarily the word which we use to designate these objects. As he is already on the outside, he considers words as a trap to catch a fleeing reality rather than as indicators which throw him out of himself into the midst of things. In short, all language is for him the mirror of the world. As a result, important changes take place in the internal economy of the word. Its sonority, its length, its masculine or feminine endings, its visual aspect, compose for him a face of flesh which *represents* rather than expresses meaning. Inversely, as the meaning is *realized*, the physical aspect of the word is reflected within it, and it, in its turn, functions as an image of the verbal body. Like its sign, too, for it has lost its pre-eminence; since words, like things, are given, the poet does not decide whether the former exist for the latter or vice versa.

Thus, between the word and the thing signified, there is established a double reciprocal relation of magical resemblance and meaning. And the poet does not *utilize* the word, he does not choose between different senses given to it; each of them, instead of appearing to him as an autonomous function, is given to him as a material quality which merges before his eyes with the other accepted meanings.

Thus, in each word he realizes, solely by the effect of the poetic *attitude*, the metaphors which Picasso dreamed of when he wanted to do a matchbox which was completely a bat without ceasing to be a matchbox. Florence is city, flower, and woman. It is city-flower, city-woman, and girl-flower all at the same time. And the strange object which thus appears has the liquidity of the *river*, the soft, tawny ardency of *gold*, and finally gives itself up with *propriety* and, by the continuous diminution of the silent *e*, prolongs indefinitely its modest blossoming.[6] To that is added the insidious effect of biography. For me, Florence is also a certain woman, an American actress who played in the silent films of my childhood, and about whom I have forgotten everything except that she was as long as a long evening glove and always a bit weary and always chaste and always married and misunderstood and whom I loved and whose name was Florence.

For the word, which tears the writer of prose away from himself and throws him out into the world, sends back to the poet his own image, like a mirror. This is what justifies the double undertaking of Leiris who, on the one hand, in his *Glossary*, tries to give certain words a *poetic definition*, that is, one which is by itself a synthesis of reciprocal implications between the sonorous body and the verbal soul, and, on the other hand, in a still unpublished work, goes in quest of remembrance of things past, taking as guides a few words which for him are particularly charged with feeling. Thus, the poetic word is a microcosm.

The crisis of language which broke out at the beginning of this century is a poetic crisis. Whatever the social and historical factors, it showed itself in an attack of depersonalization when the writer was confronted by words. He no longer knew how to use them, and, in Bergson's famous formula, he only half recognized them. He approached them with a completely fruitful feeling of strangeness. They were no longer his; they were no longer he; but in those strange mirrors, the sky, the earth, and his own life were reflected. And, finally, they became things themselves, or rather the black heart of things. And when the poet joins several of these microcosms together the case is like that of painters when they assemble their colours on the canvas. One might think that he is composing a sentence, but this is only what it appears to be. He is creating an object. The words-things are grouped by magical associations of fitness and incongruity, like colours and sounds. They attract, repel, and '*burn*' one another, and their association composes the veritable poetic unity which is the *phrase-object*.

More often the poet first has the scheme of the sentence in his mind, and the words follow. But this scheme has nothing in common with what one ordinarily calls a verbal scheme. It does not govern the construction of a meaning. Rather, it is comparable to the creative project by which Picasso, even before touching his brush, prefigures in space the *thing* which will become a buffoon or a harlequin.

Fuir, là-bas fuir, je sens que des oiseaux sont ivres
Mais ô mon cœur entends le chant des matelots.

This 'but' which rises like a monolith at the threshold of the sentence does not tie the second line to the preceding one. It colours it with a certain reserved nuance, with 'private associations' which penetrate it completely. In the same way, certain poems begin with 'and'. This conjunction no longer indicates to the mind an operation which is to be carried out; it extends throughout the paragraph to give it the absolute quality of a *sequel*. For the poet, the sentence has a tonality, a taste; by means of it he tastes for their own sake the irritating flavours of objection, of reserve, of disjunction. He carries them to the absolute. He makes them real properties of the sentence, which becomes an utter objection without being an objection *to* anything precise. He finds here those relations of reciprocal implication which we pointed out a short time ago between the poetic word and its meaning; the unit made up of the words chosen functions as an image of the interrogative or restrictive nuance, and vice versa, the interrogation is an image of the verbal unit which it delimits.

As in the following admirable lines:

O saisons! O châteaux!
Quelle âme est sans défaut?

Nobody is questioned; nobody is questioning; the poet is absent. And the question involves no answer, or rather it is its own answer. Is it therefore a false question? But it would be absurd to believe that Rimbaud 'meant' that everybody has his faults. As Breton said of Saint-Pol Roux, 'If he had meant it, he would have said it.' Nor did he *mean* to say something else. He asked an absolute question. He conferred upon the beautiful word '*âme*' an interrogative existence. The interrogation has become a thing as the anguish of Tintoretto became a yellow sky. It is no longer a meaning, but a substance. It is seen from the outside, and Rimbaud invites us to see it from the outside with him. Its strangeness arises from the fact that, in order to consider it, we place ourselves on the other side of the human condition, on the side of God.

If this is the case, one easily understands how foolish it would be to require a poetic commitment. Doubtless, emotion, even passion – and why not anger, social indignation, and political hatred? – are at the origin of the poem. But they are not *expressed* there, as in a pamphlet or in a confession. In so far as the writer of prose exhibits feelings, he illustrates them; whereas, if the poet injects his feelings into his poem, he ceases to recognize them; the words take hold of them, penetrate them, and metamorphose them; they do not signify them, even in his eyes. Emotion has become thing; it now has the opacity of things; it is compounded by the ambiguous properties of the words in which it has been enclosed. And above all, there is always much more in each phrase, in each verse, as there is more than simple anguish in the yellow sky over Golgotha. The word, the phrase-thing, inexhaustible as things, everywhere overflows the feeling which has produced them. How can one hope to provoke the indignation or the political enthusiasm of the reader when the very thing one does is to withdraw him from the human condition and invite him to consider with the eyes of God a language that has been turned inside out? Someone may say, 'You're forgetting the poets of the Resistance. You're forgetting Pierre Emmanuel.' Not a bit! They're the very ones I was going to give as examples.[7]

But even if the poet is forbidden to commit himself, is that a reason for exempting the writer of prose? What do they have in common? It is true that the prose-writer and the poet both write. But there is nothing in common between these two acts of writing except the movement of the hand which traces the letters. Otherwise, their universes are incommunicable, and what is good for one is not good for the other. Prose is, in essence, utilitarian. I would readily define the prose-writer as a man who *makes use* of words. M. Jourdan made prose to ask for his slippers, and Hitler to declare war on Poland. The writer is a *speaker*; he designates, demonstrates, orders, refuses, interpolates, begs, insults, persuades, insinuates. If he does so without any effect, he does not therefore become a poet; he is a writer who is talking and saying nothing. We have seen enough of language inside out; it is now time to look at it right side out.[8]

The art of prose is employed in discourse; its substance is by nature significative; that is, the words are first of all not objects but designations for objects; it is not first of all a matter of knowing whether they please or displease in themselves, but whether they correctly indicate a certain thing or a certain notion. Thus, it often happens that we find ourselves possessing a certain idea that someone has taught us by means of words without being able to recall a single one of the words which have transmitted it to us.

Prose is first of all an attitude of mind. As Valéry would say, there is prose when the word passes across our gaze as the glass across the sun. When one is in danger or in difficulty one grabs any instrument. When the danger is past, one does not even remember whether it was a hammer

or a stick; moreover, one never knew; all one needed was a prolongation of one's body, a means of extending one's hand to the highest branch. It was a sixth finger, a third leg, in short, a pure function which one assimilated. Thus, regarding language, it is our shell and our antennae; it protects us against others and informs us about them; it is a prolongation of our senses, a third eye which is going to look into our neighbour's heart. We are within language as within our body. We *feel* it spontaneously while going beyond it towards other ends, as we feel our hands and our feet; we perceive it when it is someone else who is using it, as we perceive the limbs of others. There is the word which is lived and the word which is met. But in both cases it is in the course of an undertaking, either of me acting upon others, or the others upon me. The word is a certain particular moment of action and has no meaning outside it. In certain cases of aphasia the possibilities of acting, of understanding situations, and of having normal relations with the other sex, are lost.

At the heart of this apraxia the destruction of language appears only as the collapse of one of the structures, the finest and the most apparent. And if prose is never anything but the privileged instrument of a certain undertaking, if it is only the poet's business to contemplate words in a disinterested fashion, then one has the right to ask the prose-writer from the very start, 'What is your aim in writing? What undertaking are you engaged in, and why does it require you to have recourse to writing?' In any case this undertaking cannot have pure contemplation as an end. For, intuition is silence, and the end of language is to communicate. One can doubtless *pin down* the results of intuition, but in this case a few words hastily scrawled on paper will suffice; it will always be enough for the author to recognize what he had in mind. If the words are assembled into sentences, with a concern for clarity, a decision foreign to the intuition, to the language itself, must intervene, the decision of confiding to others the results obtained. In each case one must ask the reason for this decision. And the common sense which our pedants too readily forget never stops repeating it. Are we not in the habit of putting this basic question to young people who are thinking of writing: 'Do you have anything to say?' Which means: something which is worth the trouble of being communicated. But what do we mean by something which is 'worth the trouble' if it is not by recourse to a system of transcendent values?

Moreover, to consider only this secondary structure of the undertaking, which is what the *verbal moment* is, the serious error of pure stylists is to think that the word is a gentle breeze which plays lightly over the surface of things, grazing them without altering them, and that the speaker is a pure *witness* who sums up with a word his harmless contemplation. To speak is to act; anything which one names is already no longer quite the same; it has lost its innocence.

If you name the behaviour of an individual, you reveal it to him; he sees himself. And since you are at the same time naming it to all others, he knows that he is seen at the moment he sees himself. The furtive gesture which he forgot while making it, begins to exist beyond all measure, to exist for everybody; it is integrated into the objective mind; it takes on new dimensions; it is retrieved. After that, how can you expect him to act in the same way? Either he will persist in his behaviour out of obstinacy and with full knowledge of what he is doing, or he will give it up. Thus, by speaking, I reveal the situation by my very intention of changing it; I reveal it to myself and to others *in order* to change it. I strike at its very heart, I transfix it, and I display it in full view; at present I dispose of it; with every word I utter, I involve myself a little more in the world, and by the same token I emerge from it a little more, since I go beyond it towards the future.

Thus, the prose-writer is a man who has chosen a certain method of secondary action which we may call action by disclosure. It is therefore permissible to ask him this second question: 'What aspect of the world do you want to disclose? What change do you want to bring into the world by this disclosure?' The 'committed' writer knows that words are action. He knows that to reveal is to change and that one can reveal only by planning to change. He has given up the impossible dream of giving an impartial picture of Society and the human condition. Man is the being towards whom no being can

be impartial, not even God. For God, if He existed, would be, as certain mystics have seen Him, in a *situation* in relationship to man. And He is also the being Who cannot even see a situation without changing it, for His gaze congeals, destroys, or sculpts, or, as does eternity, changes the object in itself. It is in love, in hate, in anger, in fear, in joy, in indignation, in admiration, in hope, in despair, that man and the world reveal themselves *in their truth*. Doubtless, the committed writer can be mediocre; he can even be conscious of being so; but as one cannot write without the intention of succeeding perfectly, the modesty with which he envisages his work should not divert him from constructing it *as if* it were to have the greatest celebrity. He should never say to himself, 'Bah! I'll be lucky if I have three thousand readers,' but rather, 'What would happen if everybody read what I wrote?' He remembers what Mosca said beside the coach which carried Fabrizio and Sanseverina away, 'If the word Love comes up between them, I'm lost.' He knows that he is the man who names what has not yet been named or what dares not tell its name. He knows that he makes the word 'love' and the word 'hate' *surge up* and with them love and hate between men who had not yet decided upon their feelings. He knows that words, as Brice-Parrain says, are 'loaded pistols'. If he speaks, he fires. He may be silent, but since he has chosen to fire, he must do it like a man, by aiming at targets, and not like a child, at random, by shutting his eyes and firing merely for the pleasure of hearing the shot go off.

Later on we shall try to determine what the goal of literature may be. But from this point on we may conclude that the writer has chosen to reveal the world and particularly to reveal man to other men so that the latter may assume full responsibility before the object which has been thus laid bare. It is assumed that no one is ignorant of the law because there is a code and because the law is written down; thereafter, you are free to violate it, but you know the risks you run. Similarly, the function of the writer is to act in such a way that nobody can be ignorant of the world and that nobody may say that he is innocent of what it's all about. And since he has once committed himself in the universe of language, he can never again pretend that he cannot speak. Once you enter the universe of meanings, there is nothing you can do to get out of it. Let words organize themselves freely and they will make sentences, and each sentence contains language in its entirety and refers back to the whole universe. Silence itself is defined in relationship to words, as the pause in music receives its meaning from the group of notes round it. This silence is a moment of language; being silent is not being dumb; it is to refuse to speak, and therefore to keep on speaking. Thus, if a writer has chosen to remain silent on any aspect whatever of the world, or, according to an expression which says just what it means, to *pass over* it in silence, one has the right to ask him a third question: 'Why have you spoken of this rather than that, and – since you speak in order to bring about change – why do you want to change this rather than that?'

All this does not prevent there being a manner of writing. One is not a writer for having chosen to say certain things, but for having chosen to say them in a certain way. And, to be sure, the style makes the value of the prose. But it should pass unnoticed. Since words are transparent and since the gaze looks through them, it would be absurd to slip in among them some panes of rough glass. Beauty is in this case only a gentle and imperceptible force. In a painting it shines forth at the very first sight; in a book it hides itself; it acts by persuasion like the charm of a voice or a face. It does not coerce; it inclines a person without his suspecting it, and he thinks that he is yielding to arguments when he is really being solicited by a charm that he does not see. The ceremonial of the mass is not faith; it disposes the harmony of words; their beauty, the balance of the phrases, *dispose* the passions of the reader without his being aware and orders them like the mass, like music, like the dance. If he happens to consider them by themselves, he loses the meaning; there remains only a boring seesaw of phrases.

In prose the aesthetic pleasure is pure only if it is thrown in into the bargain. I blush at recalling such simple ideas, but it seems that today they have been forgotten. If that were not the case, would we be told that we are planning the murder of literature, or, more simply, that

commitment is harmful to the art of writing? If the contamination of a certain kind of prose by poetry had not confused the ideas of our critics, would they dream of attacking us on the matter of form, when we have never spoken of anything but the content? There is nothing to be said about form in advance, and we have said nothing. Everyone invents his own, and one judges it afterwards. It is true that the subjects suggest the style, but they do not order it. There are no styles ranged a priori outside the literary art. What is more 'committed', what is more boring, than the idea of attacking the Jesuits? Yet, out of this Pascal made his *Provincial Letters*. In short, it is a matter of knowing what one wants to write about, whether butterflies or the condition of the Jews. And when one knows, then it remains to decide how one will write about it.

Often the two choices are only one, but among good writers the second choice never precedes the first. I know that Giraudoux has said that 'the only concern is finding one's style; the idea comes afterwards'; but he was wrong. The idea did not come. On the contrary, if one considers subjects as problems which are always open, as solicitations, as expectations, it will be easily understood that art loses nothing by being committed. On the contrary, just as physics submits to mathematicians new problems which require them to produce a new symbolism, in like manner the always new requirements of the social and the metaphysical involve the artist in finding a new language and new techniques. If we no longer write as they did in the eighteenth century, it is because the language of Racine and Saint-Evremond does not lend itself to talking about locomotives or the proletariat. After that, the purists will perhaps forbid us to write about locomotives. But art has never been on the side of the purists.

If that is the principle of commitment, what objection can one have to it? And above all *what objection has been made to it?* It has seemed to me that my opponents have not had their hearts in their work very much and that their articles contain nothing more than a long scandalized sigh which drags on over two or three columns. I should have liked to know *in the name of what*, with what conception of literature, they condemned commitment. But they have not said; they themselves have not known. The most reasonable thing would have been to support their condemnation on the old theory of art for art's sake. But none of them can accept it. That is also disturbing. We know very well that pure art and empty art are the same thing and that aesthetic purism was a brilliant manœuvre of the bourgeois of the last century who preferred to see themselves denounced as philistines rather than as exploiters. Therefore, they themselves admitted that the writer had to speak about something. But about what? I believe that their embarrassment would have been extreme if Fernandez had not found for them, after the other war, the notion of the *message*. The writer of today, they say, should in no case occupy himself with temporal affairs. Neither should he set up lines without meaning nor seek solely beauty of phrase and of imagery. His function is to deliver messages to his readers. Well, what is a message?

It must be borne in mind that most critics are men who have not had much luck and who, just about the time they were growing desperate, found a quiet little job as cemetery watchmen. God knows whether cemeteries are peaceful; none of them are more cheerful than a library. The dead are there; the only thing they have done is write. They have long since been washed clean of the sin of living, and besides, their lives are known only through other books which other dead men have written about them. Rimbaud is dead. So are Paterne Berrichon and Isabelle Rimbaud. The trouble makers have disappeared; all that remains are the little coffins that are stacked on shelves along the walls like urns in a columbarium. The critic lives badly; his wife does not appreciate him as she ought to; his children are ungrateful; the first of the month is hard on him. But it is always possible for him to enter his library, take down a book from the shelf, and open it. It gives off a slight odour of the cellar, and a strange operation begins which he has decided to call reading. From one point of view it is a possession; he lends his body to the dead in order that they may come back to life. And from another point of view it is a contact with

the beyond. Indeed, the book is by no means an object; neither is it an act, nor even a thought. Written by a dead man about dead things, it no longer has any place on this earth; it speaks of nothing which interests us directly. Left to itself, it falls back and collapses; there remain only ink spots on musty paper. And when the critic reanimates these spots, when he makes letters and words of them, they speak to him of passions which he does not feel, of bursts of anger without objects, of dead fears and hopes. It is a whole disembodied world which surrounds him, where human feelings, because they are no longer affecting, have passed on to the status of exemplary feelings and, in short, of *values*. So he persuades himself that he has entered into relations with an intelligible world which is like the truth of his daily sufferings. And their reason for being. He thinks that nature imitates art, as for Plato the world of the senses imitates that of the archetypes. And during the time he is reading, his everyday life becomes an appearance. His nagging wife, his hunchbacked son, they too are appearances. And he will put up with them because Xenophon has drawn the portrait of Xantippe and Shakespeare that of Richard the Third.

It is a holiday for him when contemporary authors do him the favour of dying. Their books, too raw, too living, too urgent, pass on to the other shore; they become less and less affecting and more and more beautiful. After a short stay in Purgatory they go on to people the intelligible heaven with new values. Bergotte, Swann, Siegfried and Bella, and M. Teste are recent acquisitions. He is waiting for Nathanaël and Ménalque. As for the writers who persist in living, he asks them only not to move about too much, and to make an effort to resemble from now on the dead men they will be. Valéry, who for twenty-five years had been publishing posthumous books, managed the matter very nicely. That is why, like some highly exceptional saints, he was canonized during his lifetime. But Malraux is scandalous.

Our critics are Catharists. They don't want to have anything to do with the real world except eat and drink in it, and since it is absolutely necessary to have relations with our fellow-creatures, they have chosen to have them with the defunct. They get excited only about classified matters, closed quarrels, stories whose ends are known. They never bet on uncertain issues, and since history has decided for them, since the objects which terrified or angered the authors they read have disappeared, since bloody disputes seem futile at a distance of two centuries, they can be charmed with balanced periods, and everything happens for them as if all literature were only a vast tautology and as if every new prose-writer had invented a new way of speaking only for the purpose of saying nothing.

To speak of archetypes and 'human nature' – is that speaking in order to say nothing? All the conceptions of our critics oscillate from one idea to the other. And, of course, both of them are false. Our great writers wanted to destroy, to edify, to demonstrate. But we no longer retain the proofs which they have advanced because we have no concern with what they mean to prove. The abuses which they denounced are no longer those of our time. There are others which rouse us which they did not suspect. History has given the lie to some of their predictions, and those which have been fulfilled became true so long ago that we have forgotten that they were at first flashes of their genius. Some of their thoughts are utterly dead, and there are others which the whole human race has taken up to its advantage and which we now regard as commonplace. It follows that the best arguments of these writers have lost their effectiveness. We admire only their order and rigour. Their most compact composition is in our eyes only an ornament, an elegant architecture of exposition, with no more practical application than such architectures as the fugues of Bach and the arabesques of the Alhambra.

We are still moved by the passion of these impassioned geometries when the geometry no longer convinces us. Or rather, by the representation of the passion. In the course of centuries the ideas have turned flat, but they remain the little personal objectives of a man who was once flesh and bone; behind the reasons of reason, which wither, we perceive the reasons of the heart, the virtues, the vices, and that great pain that men have in living. Sade does his best to

win us over, but we hardly find him scandalous. He is no longer anything but a soul eaten by a beautiful disease, a pearl-oyster. The *Letter on the Theatre* no longer keeps anyone from going to the theatre, but we find it piquant that Rousseau detested the art of the drama. If we are a bit versed in psycho-analysis, our pleasure is perfect. We shall explain the *Social Contract* by the Oedipus complex and *The Spirit of the Laws* by the inferiority complex. That is, we shall fully enjoy the well-known superiority of live dogs to dead lions. Thus, when a book presents befuddled thoughts which only have the appearance of being reasons before melting under our scrutiny and dwindling into the beatings of a heart, when the teaching that one can draw from it is radically different from what its author intended, the book is called a message. Rousseau, the father of the French Revolution, and Gobineau, the father of racism, both sent us messages. And the critic considers them with equal sympathy. If they were alive, he would have to choose between the two, to love one and hate the other. But what brings them together, above all, is that they are both profoundly and deliciously wrong, and in the same way: they are dead.

Thus, contemporary writers should be advised to deliver messages, that is, voluntarily to limit their writing to the involuntary expression of their souls. I say involuntary because the dead, from Montaigne to Rimbaud, have portrayed themselves completely, but without having meant to – it is something they have simply thrown into the bargain. The surplus which they have given us unintentionally should be the primary and professed goal of living writers. They are not to be forced to give us confessions without any seasoning, nor are they to abandon themselves to the too-naked lyricism of the romantics. But since we find pleasure in foiling the ruses of Chateaubriand or Rousseau, in surprising them in the secret places of their being at the moment they are playing at being the public man, in distinguishing the private motives from their most universal assertions, we shall ask newcomers to procure us this pleasure deliberately. So let them reason, assert, deny, refute, and prove; but the cause they are defending must be only the apparent aim of their discourse; the deeper goal is to yield themselves without seeming to do so. They must first disarm themselves of their arguments as time has done for those of the classic writers; they must bring them to bear upon subjects which interest no one or on truths so general that readers are convinced in advance. As for their ideas, they must give them an air of profundity, but with an effect of emptiness, and they must shape them in such a way that they are obviously explained by an unhappy childhood, a class hatred, or an incestuous love. Let them not presume to think in earnest; thought conceals the man, and it is the man alone who interests us. A bare tear is not lovely. It offends. A good argument also offends, as Stendhal well observed. But an argument that masks a tear – that's what we're after. The argument removes the obscenity from the tears; the tears, by revealing their origin in the passions, remove the aggressiveness from the argument. We shall be neither too deeply touched nor at all convinced, and we shall be able to yield ourselves safely to that moderate pleasure which, as everyone knows, we derive from the contemplation of works of art. Thus, this is 'true', 'pure' literature, a subjective thing which reveals itself under the aspect of the objective, a discourse so curiously contrived that it is equivalent to silence, a thought which debates with itself, a reason which is only the mask of madness, an Eternal which lets it be understood that it is only a moment of History, a historical moment which, by the hidden side which it reveals, suddenly sends back a perpetual lesson to the eternal man, but which is produced against the express wishes of those who do the teaching.

When all is said and done, the message is a soul which is made object. A soul, and what is to be done with a soul? One contemplates it at a respectful distance. It is not customary to show one's soul in society without a powerful motive. But, with certain reservations, convention permits some individuals to put theirs into commerce, and all adults may procure it for themselves. For many people today, works of the mind are thus little wandering souls which one acquires at a modest price; there is good old Montaigne's, dear La Fontaine's, and that of Jean-Jacques and of Jean-Paul and of delicious Gérard. What is called literary art is the sum of the treatments which

make them inoffensive. Tanned, refined, chemically treated, they provide their acquirers with the opportunity of devoting some moments of a life completely turned outwards to the cultivation of subjectivity. Custom guarantees it to be without risk. Montaigne's scepticism? Who can take it seriously since the author of the *Essays* got frightened when the plague ravaged Bordeaux? Or Rousseau's humanitarianism, since 'Jean-Jacques' put his children into an orphanage? And the strange revelations of *Sylvie*, since Gérard de Nerval was mad? At the very most, the professional critic will set up infernal dialogues between them and will inform us that French thought is a perpetual colloquy between Pascal and Montaigne. In so doing he has no intention of making Pascal and Montaigne more alive, but of making Malraux and Gide more dead. Finally, when the internal contradictions of the life and the work have made both of them useless, when the message, in its imponderable depth, has taught us these capital truths, 'that man is neither good nor bad', 'that there is a great deal of suffering in human life', 'that genius is only great patience', this dismal bungling will have achieved its ultimate purpose, and the reader, as he lays down the book, will be able to cry out with a tranquil soul, 'All this is only literature.'

But since, for us, writing is an enterprise; since writers are alive before being dead; since we think that we must try to be as right as we can in our books; and since, even if afterwards the centuries show us to be in the wrong, this is no reason why they should prove us wrong in advance; since we think that the writer should commit himself completely in his works, and not in an abjectly passive rôle by putting forward his vices, his misfortunes, and his weaknesses, but as a resolute will and as a choice, as this total enterprise of living that each one of us is, it is then proper that we take up this problem at its beginning and that we, in our turn, ask ourselves: '*Why* does one write?'

Translated by Bernard Frechtman

Notes

1 *Editor*: this is how the chapter starts. Sartre's 'No, we do not want to…' follows on from the Foreword to *What is Literature?*. Sartre is replying to a 'smart-aleck' who asks 'And poetry? And painting? And music? You want to commit them, too?'. The one-page Foreword, which immediately precedes the chapter, addresses political (and implicitly Communist) commitment in literature, and is a riposte to those critics who think that 'the worst artists are the most committed'. Sartre accuses the critics of not understanding the nature of writing, and suggests that 'the best answer to give them is to examine the art of writing without prejudice'.

2 At least in general. The greatness and error of Klee lie in his attempt to make a painting both sign and object.

3 I say 'create', not 'imitate', which is enough to squelch the bombast of M. Charles Estienne, who has obviously not understood a word of my argument and who is dead set on tilting at shadows.

4 A periodical edited by M. Sartre. – Tr.

5 This is the example cited by Bataille in *Inner Experience*.

6 This sentence is not fully intelligible in translation as the author is here associating the component sounds of the word 'Florence' with the meaning of the French words they evoke. Thus: FL-OR-ENCE, *fleuve*, *or*, and *décence*. The latter part of the sentence refers to the practice in French poetry of giving, in certain circumstances, a syllabic value to the otherwise silent terminal *e*. – Tr.

7 If you wish to know the origin of this attitude towards language, the following are a few brief indications.

Originally, poetry creates the *myth*, while the prose-writer draws its *portrait*. In reality, the human act, governed by needs and urged on by the useful is, in a sense, a *means*. It passes unnoticed, and it is the result which counts. When I extend my hand *in order* to take up my pen, I have only a fleeting and obscure consciousness of my gesture; it is the pen which I see. Thus, man is alienated by his ends. Poetry reverses the relationship: the world and things become inessential, become a pretext for the act which becomes its own end. The vase is there so that the girl may perform the graceful act of filling it; the Trojan War, so that Hector

and Achilles may engage in that heroic combat. The action, detached from its goals, which become blurred, becomes an act of prowess or a dance. Nevertheless, however indifferent he might have been to the success of the enterprise, the poet, before the nineteenth century, remained in harmony with society as a whole. He did not use language for the end which prose seeks, but he had the same confidence in it as the prose-writer.

With the coming of bourgeois society, the poet puts up a common front with the prose-writer to declare it unliveable. His job is always to create the myth of man, but he passes from white magic to black magic. Man is always presented as the absolute end, but by the success of his enterprise he is sucked into a utilitarian collectivity. The thing that is in the background of his act and that will allow transition to the myth is thus no longer success, but defeat. By stopping the infinite series of his projects like a screen, defeat alone returns him to himself in his purity. The world remains the inessential, but it is now there as a pretext for defeat. The finality of the thing is to send man back to himself by blocking the route. Moreover, it is not a matter of arbitrarily introducing defeat and ruin into the course of the world, but rather of having no eyes for anything but that. Human enterprise has two aspects: it is both success and failure. The dialectical scheme is inadequate for reflecting upon it. We must make our vocabulary and the frames of our reason more supple. Some day I am going to try to describe that strange reality, History, which is neither objective, nor ever quite subjective, in which the dialectic is contested, penetrated, and corroded by a kind of antidialectic, but which is still a dialectic. But that is the philosopher's affair. One does not ordinarily consider the two faces of Janus; the man of action sees one and the poet sees the other. When the instruments are broken and unusable, when plans are blasted and effort is useless, the world appears with a childlike and terrible freshness, without supports, without paths. It has the maximum reality because it is crushing for man, and as action, in any case, generalizes, defeat restores to things their individual reality. But, by an expected reversal, the defeat, considered as a final end, is both a contesting and an appropriation of this universe. A contesting, because man is worth more than that which crushes; he no longer contests things in their 'little bit of reality', like the engineer or the captain, but, on the contrary, in their 'too full of reality', by his very existence as a vanquished person; he is the remorse of the world. An appropriation, because the world, by ceasing to be the tool of success, becomes the instrument of failure. So there it is, traversed by an obscure finality; it is its coefficient of adversity which serves, the more human in so far as it is more hostile to man. The defeat itself turns into salvation. Not that it makes us yield to some 'beyond', but by itself it shifts and is metamorphosed. For example, poetic language rises out of the ruins of prose. If it is true that the word is a betrayal and that communication is impossible, then each word by itself recovers its individuality and becomes an instrument of our defeat and a receiver of the incommunicable. It is not that there is another thing to communicate; but the communication of prose having miscarried, it is the very meaning of the word which becomes the pure incommunicable. Thus, the failure of communication becomes a suggestion of the incommunicable, and the thwarted project of utilizing words is succeeded by the pure disinterested intuition of the word. Thus, we again meet with the description which we attempted earlier in this study, but in the more general perspective of the absolute valorization of the defeat, which seems to me the original attitude of contemporary poetry. Note also that this choice confers upon the poet a very precise function in the collectivity: in a highly integrated or religious society, the defeat is masked by the State or redeemed by Religion; in a less integrated and secular society, such as our democracies, it is up to poetry to redeem them.

Poetry is a case of the loser winning. And the genuine poet chooses to lose, even if he has to go so far as to die, in order to win. I repeat that I am talking of contemporary poetry. History presents other forms of poetry. It is not my concern to show their connection with ours. Thus, if one absolutely wishes to speak of the commitment of the poet, let us say that he is the man who commits himself to lose. This is the deeper meaning of that tough-luck, of that curse with which he always claims kinship and which he always attributes to an intervention from without; whereas it is his deepest choice, the source, and not the consequence of his poetry. He is certain of the total defeat of the human enterprise and arranges to fail in his own life in order to bear witness, by his individual defeat, to human defeat in general. Thus, he challenges, as we shall see, which is what the prose-writer does too. But the challenge of prose is carried on in the name of a greater success; and that of poetry, in the name of the hidden defeat which every victory conceals.

8 It goes without saying that in all poetry a certain form of prose, that is, of success, is present; and, vice versa, the driest prose always contains a bit of poetry, that is, a certain form of defeat; no prose-writer is *quite* capable of expressing what he wants to say; he says too much or not enough; each phrase is a wager, a risk assumed; the more cautious one is, the more attention the word attracts; as Valéry has shown, no one can understand a word to its very bottom. Thus, each word is used simultaneously for its clear and social meaning and for certain obscure resonances – let me say, almost for its physiognomy. The reader, too, is sensitive to this. At once we are no longer on the level of concerted communication, but on that of grace and chance; the silences of prose are poetic because they mark its limits, and it is for the purpose of greater clarity that I have been considering the extreme cases of pure prose and pure poetry. However, it need not be concluded that we can pass from poetry to prose by a continuous series of intermediate forms. If the prose-writer is too eager to fondle his words, the *eidos* of 'prose' is shattered and we fall into highfalutin nonsense. If the poet relates, explains, or teaches, the poetry complex becomes *prosaic*; he has lost the game. It is a matter of structures, impure, but well-defined.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Jean-Paul Sartre in English

The Transcendence of the Ego (1936), trans. F. Williams and R. Kirkpatrick, New York: Noonday Press, 1962.
The Transcendence of the Ego (1936), trans. A. Brown, London: Routledge, 2004.
Nausea (1938), trans. R. Baldick, London: Penguin, 1963.
Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions (1939), trans. P. Mairet, London: Routledge, 1971.
The Psychology of the Imagination (1940), trans. B. Frechtman, London: Routledge, 1972.
The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination (1940), trans. J. Webber, London: Routledge, 2004.
Being and Nothingness (1943), trans. H. Barnes, London: Routledge, 1989; first published London: Methuen, 1958.
Huis Clos (1944), ed. K. Gore, London: Routledge, 1987.
Huis Clos and Other Plays (1944), trans. S. Gilbert and K. Black, London: Penguin, 1982.
The Age of Reason (1945), trans. E. Sutton, London: Penguin, 1961.
The Reprieve (1945), trans. E. Sutton, London: Penguin, 1963.
Existentialism and Humanism (1946), trans. P. Mairet, London: Methuen, 1948.
What is Literature? (1947), trans. B. Frechtman, London: Routledge, 1998.
Truth and Existence (written 1948, published posthumously in 1989), trans. A. van den Hoven, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
Iron in the Soul (1949), trans. G. Hopkins, London: Penguin, 1963.
Critique of Dialectical Reason, Vol. 1: Theory of Practical Ensembles (1960), trans. A. Sheridan-Smith, London: New Left Books, 1976; Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1976.
The Words (1963), trans. B. Frechtman, New York: Braziller, 1964.
Between Existentialism and Marxism, trans. J. Matthews, London: New Left Books, 1974.
Critique of Dialectical Reason, Vol. 2: The Intelligibility of History, trans. Q. Hoare, London: Verso, 1991.
Last Chance (Roads to Freedom IV), trans. C. Vasey, London: Continuum, 2009.
Essays in Existentialism, ed. W. Baskin, New York: Citadel, 1995.
Basic Writings, ed. S. Priest, London: Routledge, 2000.

Further reading

Introductions to Sartre's philosophy are given by Caws (1979), Cox (2006), Flynn (2004), Howells (1995), and Morris (2008). Guignon (2004), Howells (1992), McCulloch (1994), Sherman (2007), Wahl (1969), and Webber (2009) offer critical commentary on a range of topics falling under his existentialism. For studies of Sartre's place within twentieth-century thought, including his influence on later philosophy, see Fox (2003), Fourny and Minahen (1997), Murdoch (1999), Roudinesco (2008), and Silverman (1987).

Studies of Sartre's literary aesthetics can be found in Cazeaux (2001), Cox (2009), Flynn (2006), Goldthorpe (1984), Guerlac (1997), Jackson (2008), Jameson (1984), Kaelin (1966), McBride (1997), Perna (2001), and

Stawarska (2005), with accounts of his work on vision given by Bauer (1969), Jay (1993), and Thompson (1992). For appraisals of his contribution to existentialist ethics, see Anderson (1993), Detmer (1988), Flynn (1997), Jeanson (1991), and Taylor (1991).

T.C. Anderson, *Sartre's Two Ethics: From Authenticity to Integral Humanity*, Chicago: Open Court, 1993.
G.H. Bauer, *Sartre and the Artist*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.
P. Caws, *Sartre*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.
C. Cazeaux, 'Words and things in phenomenology and existentialism', in C. Norris and K. Knellwolf (eds), *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 309–22.
G. Cox, *Sartre: A Guide for the Perplexed*, London: Continuum, 2006.
———, *Sartre and Fiction*, London: Continuum, 2009.
D. Detmer, *Freedom as a Value: A Critique of the Ethical Theory of Jean-Paul Sartre*, La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1988.
T. Flynn, 'Ethics in Sartre', *Contributions to Phenomenology*, 1997, vol. 18, pp. 184–88.
———, 'Jean-Paul Sartre', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2004. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sartre/ (accessed 1 May 2010).
———, 'Sartre as philosopher of the imagination', *Philosophy Today*, 2006, vol. 50, pp. 106–12.
J.-F. Fourny and C.D. Minahen (eds), *Situating Sartre in Twentieth-Century Thought and Culture*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997.
N.F. Fox, *The New Sartre: Explorations in Postmodernism*, London: Continuum, 2003.
R. Goldthorpe, *Sartre: Literature and Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
S. Guerlac, *Literary Polemics: Bataille, Sartre, Valéry, Breton*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.
C. Guignon, *The Existentialists: Critical Essays on Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004.
C. Howells (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Sartre*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
———, *Sartre*, New York: Longman, 1995.
C.A. Jackson, 'The style of engagement and the engagement of style: Sartre and the literary text', *Romance Studies*, 2008, vol. 26, pp. 21–32.
F. Jameson, *Sartre: The Origins of a Style*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.
M. Jay, 'Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and the search for a new ontology of sight', *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 263–328.
F. Jeanson, *Sartre and the Problem of Morality*, trans. R. Stone, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
E.F. Kaelin, *An Existentialist Aesthetic: The Theories of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966.
W.L. McBride (ed.), *Existentialist Literature and Aesthetics*, New York: Garland, 1997.
G. McCulloch, *Using Sartre: An Analytical Introduction to Early Sartrean Themes*, London: Routledge, 1994.
K.J. Morris, *Sartre*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2008.
I. Murdoch, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist*, London: Vintage, 1999.
M. Perna, 'Imagination and creativity in Sartre', *Philosophy Now*, 2001, vol. 32, pp. 15–17.
E. Roudinesco, *Philosophy in Turbulent Times: Canguilhem, Sartre, Foucault, Althusser, Deleuze, Derrida*, trans. W. McCuaig, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
D. Sherman, *Sartre and Adorno: The Dialectics of Subjectivity*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007.
H.J. Silverman, *Inscriptions: Between Phenomenology and Structuralism*, London: Routledge, 1987.
B. Stawarska, 'Defining imagination: Sartre between Husserl and Janet', *Phenomenology and Cognitive Sciences*, 2005, vol. 4, pp. 133–53.
C. Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991.
H.F. Thompson, 'From metaphor to matter: Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and the subject of sight', *Analecta Husserliana*, 1992, vol. 42, pp. 185–202.
J.A. Wahl, *Philosophies of Existence: An Introduction to the Basic Thought of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel, Sartre*, trans. F.M. Lory, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.
J. Webber, *The Existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre*, New York: Routledge, 2009.

Chapter 6

EMMANUEL LEVINAS

Born in Lithuania, Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995) spent the greater part of his academic life in France, obtaining French citizenship in 1930. One of the most distinctive features of his work is the importance he assigns to the nature of the contact we have with others or the Other. The 'Other' is a technical term from Hegel, denoting that which an individual encounters as distinct from herself, e.g. an object or another person, yet which plays a role in affirming the individual's sense of her own identity. Levinas continues the phenomenological tradition of challenging the subject–object binary, the distinction between a self-contained ego and a mind-independent world, as the basic structure of experience. The Other, for him, is something which 'our' being opens onto ('our' is in inverted commas because its identity is not stable and is open to question) and which is a source of difference, opacity, irreducibility or beyondness, qualities collectively referred to by Levinas as 'alterity'. His aim is for life to be lived *otherwise*, a life that is open to difference and 'beyond oneself', in contrast to Western philosophy's traditional model of being as a series of atomistic subjects confronting one another as isolated units and carving the world into reductive, universalizable categories.

Levinas's argument in 'Reality and its Shadow' (1948) is not dissimilar from that given in Sartre's 'What is Writing?'. Art, Levinas claims, impedes our openness to others. It is, he argues, a 'doubling of reality', like a shadow, with a 'density of its own' achieved by stopping time and freezing beings in images and statues. As a result, a 'fissure' or an 'interval' (called the 'meanwhile') is created between art and reality. Elsewhere, the concept of 'interval' plays a positive role in his ontology: a space of encounter 'in which the act of being is being acted and which the individual at once creates and bridges, compel[ling] us to abandon the notion of a being-content, an already actualized being'.[1] However, here, the interval as the 'meanwhile' assigns art 'a dimension of evasion': we become preoccupied with it at the expense of our obligation to deal with others. The idea that art, because of its substantiality, obstructs human activity comes from Plato. But whereas Plato recommends that the artist should be banished from the ideal state, Levinas insists that art can be re-integrated into human affairs through conceptual, philosophical criticism. The critic works not with phenomenal particularities but with conceptual generalities. She lacks 'the force to arouse realities' and so, instead, must 'speak in enigmas, by allusions, by suggestion, in equivocations'. The inherent incompleteness of her medium, Levinas asserts, means she is more attentive to her rootedness in the world among others.

Both 'What is Writing?' and 'Reality and its Shadow' were first published in the journal *Les Temps Modernes*, created by Sartre in 1944. Levinas's article appeared a year after Sartre's, but the editorial board of the journal, of which Sartre was a member, saw fit to add a preface drawing attention to its Sartrean themes. However, Levinas's only knowledge of Sartre's work had come from reading *Being and Nothingness* while he was a prisoner of war, and the book gives little indication of Sartre's later attitude towards the ontology of representation. Nevertheless, Levinas's account differs from Sartre's in that it offers art criticism as a category of writing which

reintroduces art back into 'the true homeland of the mind'. Although Sartre had himself already begun to write critical reviews of works by Alberto Giacometti and Alexander Calder, art and language, as they appear in 'What is Writing?', remain divided.

Note

1 E. Levinas, 'Martin Buber and the theory of knowledge', *The Levinas Reader*, S. Hand (ed.), Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, p.66.

■ ■ ■

REALITY AND ITS SHADOW
EMMANUEL LEVINAS

Art and criticism

It is generally, dogmatically, admitted that the function of art is expression, and that artistic expression rests on cognition. An artist – even a painter, even a musician – tells. He tells of the ineffable. An artwork prolongs, and goes beyond, common perception. What common perception trivializes and misses, an artwork apprehends in its irreducible essence. It thus coincides with metaphysical intuition. Where common language abdicates, a poem or a painting speaks. Thus an artwork is more real than reality and attests to the dignity of the artistic imagination, which sets itself up as knowledge of the absolute. Though it be disparaged as an aesthetic canon, realism nevertheless retains all its prestige. In fact it is repudiated only in the name of a higher realism. Surrealism is a superlative.

Criticism too professes this dogma. It enters into the artist's game with all the seriousness of science. In artworks it studies psychology, characters, environments, and landscapes – as though in an aesthetic event an object were by the microscope or telescope of artistic vision exposed for the curiosity of an investigator. But, alongside of difficult art, criticism seems to lead a parasitic existence. A depth of reality inaccessible to conceptual intelligence becomes its prey. Or else criticism substitutes itself for art. Is not to interpret Mallarmé to betray him? Is not to interpret his work faithfully to suppress it? To say clearly what he says obscurely is to reveal the vanity of his obscure speech.

Criticism as a distinct function of literary life, expert and professional criticism, appearing as an item in newspapers and journals and in books, can indeed seem suspect and pointless. But it has its source in the mind of the listener, spectator or reader; criticism exists as a public's mode of comportment. Not content with being absorbed in aesthetic enjoyment, the public feels an irresistible need to speak. The fact that there might be something for the public to say, when the artist refuses to say about artwork anything in addition to the work itself, the fact that one cannot contemplate in silence, justifies the critic. He can be defined as the one that still has something to say when everything has been said, that can say about the work something else than that work.

One then has the right to ask if the artist really knows and speaks. He does in a preface or a manifesto, certainly; but then he is himself a part of the public. If art originally were neither language nor knowledge, if it were therefore situated outside of 'being in the world' which is coextensive with truth,[1] criticism would be rehabilitated. It would represent the intervention of the understanding necessary for integrating the inhumanity and inversion of art into human life and into the mind.

Perhaps the tendency to apprehend the aesthetic phenomenon in literature, where speech provides the material for the artist, explains the contemporary dogma of knowledge through art. We are not always attentive to the transformation that speech undergoes in literature. Art as speech, art as knowledge, then brings on the problem of committed art, which is a problem of committed literature.[2] The completion, the indelible seal of artistic production by which the artwork remains essentially disengaged, is underestimated – that supreme moment when the last brush stroke is done, when there is not another word to add to or to strike from the text, by virtue of which every artwork is classical. Such completion is different from the simple interruption which limits language and the works of nature and industry. Yet we might wonder if we should not recognize an element of art in the work of craftsmen, in all human work, commercial and diplomatic, in the measure that, in addition to its perfect adaptation to its ends, it bears witness to an accord with some destiny extrinsic to the course of things, which situates it outside the world, like the forever bygone past of ruins, like the elusive strangeness of the exotic. The artist stops because the work refuses to accept anything more, appears saturated. The work is completed *in spite of* the social or material causes that interrupt it. It does not give itself out as the beginning of a dialogue.

This completion does not necessarily justify the academic aesthetics of art for art's sake. The formula is false inasmuch as it situates art *above* reality and recognizes no master for it, and it is immoral inasmuch as it liberates the artist from his duties as a man and assures him of a pretentious and facile nobility. But a work would not belong to art if it did not have this formal structure of completion, if at least in this way it were not disengaged. We have to understand the value of this disengagement, and first of all its meaning. Is to disengage oneself from the world always to go *beyond*, toward the region of Platonic ideas and toward the eternal which towers above the world? Can one not speak of a disengagement on the hither side – of an interruption of time by a movement going on on the hither side of time, in its 'interstices'?

To go beyond is to communicate with ideas, to understand. Does not the function of art lie in not understanding? Does not obscurity provide it with its very element and a completion sui generis, foreign to dialectics and the life of ideas? Will we then say that the artist knows and expresses the very obscurity of the real? But that leads to a much more general question, to which this whole discussion of art is subordinate: in what does the *non-truth* of being consist? Is it always to be defined by comparison with truth, as what is left over after *understanding*? Does not the commerce with the obscure, as a totally independent ontological event, describe categories irreducible to those of cognition? We should like to show this event in art. Art does not know a particular type of reality; it contrasts with knowledge. It is the very event of obscuring, a descent of the night, an invasion of shadow. To put it in theological terms, which will enable us to delimit however roughly our ideas by comparison with contemporary notions: art does not belong to the order of revelation. Nor does it belong to that of creation, which moves in just the opposite direction.

The imaginary, the sensible, the musical

The most elementary procedure of art consists in substituting for the object its image. Its image, and not its concept. A concept is the object *grasped*, the intelligible object. Already by action we maintain a living relationship with a real object; we grasp it, we conceive it. The image neutralizes this real relationship, this primary conceiving through action. The well-known disinterestedness of artistic vision, which the current aesthetic analysis stops with, signifies above all a blindness to concepts.

But the disinterestedness of the artist scarcely deserves this name. For it excludes freedom, which the notion of disinterestedness implies. Strictly speaking, it also excludes bondage, which presupposes freedom. An image does not engender a *conception*, as do scientific cognition and truth; it does not involve Heidegger's 'letting be', *Sein-lassen*, in which objectivity is transmuted into power.[3] An image

marks a hold over us rather than our initiative, a fundamental passivity. Possessed, inspired, an artist, we say, harkens to a muse. An image is musical. Its passivity is directly visible in magic, song, music, and poetry. The exceptional structure of aesthetic existence invokes this singular term magic, which will enable us to make the somewhat worn-out notion of passivity precise and concrete.

The idea of rhythm, which art criticism so frequently invokes but leaves in the state of a vague suggestive notion and catch-all, designates not so much an inner law of the poetic order as the way the poetic order affects us, closed wholes whose elements call for one another like the syllables of a verse, but do so only insofar as they impose themselves on us, disengaging themselves from reality. *But they impose themselves on us without our assuming them*. Or rather, our consenting to them is inverted into a participation. Their entry into us is one with our entry into them. Rhythm represents a unique situation where we cannot speak of consent, assumption, initiative or freedom, because the subject is caught up and carried away by it. The subject is part of its own representation. It is so not even despite itself, for in rhythm there is no longer a oneself, but rather a sort of passage from oneself to anonymity. This is the captivation or incantation of poetry and music. It is a mode of being to which applies neither the form of consciousness, since the I is there stripped of its prerogative to assume, its power, nor the form of unconsciousness, since the whole situation and all its articulations are in a dark light, *present*. Such is a waking dream. Neither habits, reflexes, nor instinct operate in this light. The particular automatic character of a walk or a dance to music is a mode of being where nothing is unconscious, but where consciousness, paralyzed in its freedom, plays, totally absorbed in this playing. To listen to music is in a sense to refrain from dancing or stepping; the movement or gesture is of little import. It would be more appropriate to talk of interest than of disinterestedness with respect to images. An image is interesting, without the slightest sense of utility, interesting in the sense of *involving*, in the etymological sense – to be *among* things which should have had only the status of objects. To be 'among things' is different from Heidegger's 'being-in-the-world'; it constitutes the pathos of the imaginary world of dreams – the subject is among things not only by virtue of its density of being, requiring a 'here', a 'somewhere', and retaining its freedom; it is among things as a thing, as part of the spectacle. It is exterior to itself, but with an exteriority which is not that of a body, since the pain of the I-actor is felt by the I-spectator, and not through compassion. Here we have really an exteriority of the inward. It is surprising that phenomenological analysis never tried to apply this fundamental paradox of rhythm and dreams, which describes a sphere situated outside of the conscious and the unconscious, a sphere whose role in all ecstatic rites has been shown by ethnography; it is surprising that we have stayed with metaphors of 'ideomotor' phenomena and with the study of the prolongation of sensations into actions. Here we shall use the terms rhythm and musical while thinking of this reversal of power into participation.

Then we must detach them from the arts of sound where they are ordinarily envisioned exclusively, and draw them out into a general aesthetic category. Rhythm certainly does have its privileged locus in music, for the musician's element realizes the pure deconceptualization of reality. Sound is the quality most detached from an object. Its relation with the substance from which it emanates is not inscribed in its quality. It resounds impersonally. Even its timbre, a trace of its belonging to an object, is submerged in its quality, and does not retain the structure of a relation. Hence in listening we do not apprehend a 'something', but are without concepts: musicality belongs to sound naturally. And indeed, among all the classes of images distinguished by traditional psychology, the image of sound is most akin to real sound. To insist on the musicality of every image is to see in an image its detachment from an object, that independence from the category of substance which the analyses of our textbooks ascribe to pure sensation not yet converted into perception (sensation as an adjective), which for empirical psychology remains a limit case, a purely hypothetical given.

It is as though sensation free from all conception, that famous sensation that eludes introspection, appeared with images. Sensation is not a residue of perception, but has a function of its own – the hold that an image has over us, a function of rhythm. What is today called being-in-the-world is an existence with concepts. Sensibility takes place as a distinct ontological event, but is realized only by the imagination.

If art consists in substituting an image for being, the aesthetic element, as its etymology indicates, is sensation. The whole of our world, with its elementary and intellectually elaborated givens, can touch us musically, can become an image. That is why classical art which is attached to objects – all those paintings, all those statues representing *something*, all those poems which recognize syntax and punctuation – conforms no less to the true essence of art than the modern works which claim to be pure music, pure painting, pure poetry, because they drive objects out of the world of sounds, colours and words into which those works introduce us – because they break up representation. A represented object, by the simple fact of becoming an image, is converted into a non-object; the image as such enters into categories proper to it which we would like to bring out here. The disincarnation of reality by an image is not equivalent to a simple diminution in degree. It belongs to an ontological dimension that does not extend between us and a reality to be captured, a dimension where commerce with reality is a rhythm.

Image and resemblance

The phenomenology of images insists on their transparency. The intention of one who contemplates an image is said to go directly through the image, as through a window, into the world it represents, and aims at an *object*.[4] Yet nothing is more mysterious than the term 'world it represents' – since representation expresses just that function of an image that still remains to be determined.

The theory of transparency was set up in reaction to the theory of mental images, of an inner tableau which the perception of an object would leave in us. In imagination our gaze then always goes outward, but imagination modifies or neutralizes this gaze: the real world appears in it as it were between parentheses or quote marks. The problem is to make clear what these devices used in writing mean. The imaginary world is said to present itself as unreal – but can one say more about this unreality?

In what does an image differ from a symbol, a sign, or a word? By the very way it refers to its object: resemblance. But that supposes that thought stops on the image itself; it consequently supposes a certain opacity of the image. A sign, for its part, is pure transparency, nowise counting for itself. Must we then come back to taking the image as an independent reality which resembles the original? No, but on condition that we take resemblance not as the result of a comparison between an image and the original, but as the very movement that engenders the image. Reality would not be only what it is, what it is disclosed to be in truth, but would be also its double, its shadow, its image.

Being is not only itself, it escapes itself. Here is a person who is what he is; but he does not make us forget, does not absorb, cover over entirely the objects he holds and the way he holds them, his gestures, limbs, gaze, thought, skin, which escape from under the identity of his substance, which like a torn sack is unable to contain them. Thus a person bears on his face, alongside of its being with which he coincides, its own caricature, its picturesqueness. The picturesque is always to some extent a caricature. Here is a familiar everyday thing, perfectly adapted to the hand which is accustomed to it, but its qualities, colour, form, and position at the same time remain as it were behind its being, like the 'old garments' of a soul which had withdrawn from that thing, like a 'still life'. And yet all this is the person and is the thing. There is then a duality in this person, this thing, a duality in its being. It is what it is and it is a stranger to itself, and there is a relationship between these two moments. We will say the thing is itself

and is its image. And that this relationship between the thing and its image is resemblance.

This situation is akin to what a fable brings about. Those animals that portray men give the fable its peculiar colour inasmuch as men are seen *as* these animals and not only *through* these animals; the animals stop and fill up thought. It is in this that all the power and originality of allegory lies. An allegory is not a simple auxiliary to thought, a way of rendering an abstraction concrete and popular for childlike minds, a poor man's symbol. It is an ambiguous commerce with reality in which reality does not refer to itself but to its reflection, its shadow. An allegory thus represents what in the object itself doubles it up. An image, we can say, is an allegory of being.

A being is that which is, that which reveals itself in its truth, and, at the same time, it resembles itself, is its own image. The original gives itself as though it were at a distance from itself, as though it were withdrawing itself, as though something in a being delayed behind being. The consciousness of the absence of the object which characterizes an image is not equivalent to a simple neutralization of the thesis, as Husserl would have it, but is equivalent to an alteration of the very being of the object, where its essential forms appear as a garb that it abandons in withdrawing. To contemplate an image is to contemplate a picture. The image has to be understood by starting with the phenomenology of pictures, and not the converse.

In the vision of the represented object a painting has a density of its own: it is itself an object of the gaze. The consciousness of the representation lies in knowing that the object is not there. The perceived elements are not the object but are like its 'old garments', spots of colour, chunks of marble or bronze. These elements do not serve as symbols, and in the absence of the object they do not force its presence, but by their presence insist on its absence. They occupy its place fully to mark its removal, as though the represented object died, were degraded, were disincarnated in its own reflection. The painting then does not lead us beyond the given reality, but somehow to the hither side of it. It is a symbol in reverse. The poet and painter who have discovered the 'mystery' and 'strangeness' of the world they inhabit every day are free to think that they have gone beyond the real. The mystery of being is not its myth. The artist moves in a universe that precedes (in what sense we will see below) the world of creation, a universe that the artist has already gone beyond by his thought and his everyday actions.

The idea of shadow or reflection to which we have appealed – of an essential doubling of reality by its image, of an ambiguity 'on the hither side' – extends to the light itself, to thought, to the inner life. The whole of reality bears on its face its own allegory, outside of its revelation and its truth. In utilizing images art not only reflects, but brings about this allegory. In art allegory is introduced into the world, as truth is accomplished in cognition. These are two contemporary possibilities of being. Alongside of the simultaneity of the idea and the soul – that is, of being and its disclosure – which the *phaedo* teaches, there is the simultaneity of a being and its reflection. The absolute at the same time reveals itself to reason and lends itself to a sort of erosion, outside of all causality. Non-truth is not an obscure residue of being, but is its sensible character itself, by which there is resemblance and images in the world. Because of resemblance the Platonic world of becoming is a lesser world, of appearances only. As a dialectic of being and non-being, becoming does indeed, since the *Parmenides*, make its appearance in the world of Ideas. It is through imitation that participation engenders shadows, distinct from the participation of the Ideas in one another which is revealed to the understanding. The discussion over the primacy of art or of nature – does art imitate nature or does natural beauty imitate art? – fails to recognize the simultaneity of truth and image.

The notion of shadow thus enables us to situate the economy of resemblance within the general economy of being. Resemblance is not a participation of a being in an idea (the old argument of the third man shows the futility of that); it is the very structure of the sensible as such. The sensible is being insofar as it resembles itself, insofar as, outside of its triumphal work of being, it casts a shadow, emits that obscure and elusive essence, that phantom essence which

cannot be identified with the essence revealed in truth. There is not first an image – a neutralized vision of the object – which then differs from a sign or symbol because of its resemblance with the original; the neutralization of position in an image is precisely this resemblance.

The *transcendence* Jean Wahl speaks of, when separated from the ethical significance it has for him and taken in a strictly ontological sense, can characterize this phenomenon of degradation or erosion of the absolute which we see in images and in resemblance.

The meanwhile

To say that an image is a shadow of being would in turn be only to use a metaphor, if we did not show *where* the hither side we are speaking of is situated. To speak of inertia or death would hardly help us, for first we should have to say what the ontological signification of materiality itself is.

We have envisioned the image as the caricature, allegory or picturesque element which reality bears on its own face. All of Giraudoux's work effects a casting of reality into images, with a consistency which has not been fully appreciated, despite all Giraudoux's glory.[5] But up to now we seemed to be basing our conception on a fissure in being between being and its essence which does not adhere to it but masks and betrays it. But this in fact only enables us to approach the phenomenon we are concerned with. The art called classical – the art of antiquity and of its imitators, the art of ideal forms – corrects the caricature of being – the snub nose, the stiff gesture. Beauty is being dissimulating its caricature, covering over or absorbing its shadow. Does it absorb it completely? It is not a question of wondering whether the perfect forms of Greek art could be still more perfect, nor if they seem perfect in all latitudes of the globe. The insurmountable caricature in the most perfect image manifests itself in its stupidness as an idol. The image *qua* idol leads us to the ontological significance of its unreality. This time the work of being itself, the very *existing* of a being,[6] is doubled up with a semblance of existing.

To say that an image is an idol is to affirm that every image is in the last analysis plastic, and that every artwork is in the end a statue – a stoppage of time, or rather its delay behind itself. But we must show in what sense it stops or delays, and in what sense a statue's existing is a semblance of the existing of being.

A statue realizes the paradox of an instant that endures without a future. Its duration is not really an instant. It does not give itself out here as an infinitesimal element of duration, the instant of a flash; it has in its own way a quasi-eternal duration. We are not thinking just of the duration of an artwork itself as an object, of the permanence of writings in libraries and of statues in museums. Within the life, or rather the death, of a statue, an instant endures infinitely: eternally Laocoon will be caught up in the grip of serpents; the Mona Lisa will smile eternally. Eternally the future announced in the strained muscles of Laocoon will be unable to become present. Eternally, the smile of the Mona Lisa about to broaden will not broaden. An eternally suspended future floats around the congealed position of a statue like a future forever to come. The imminence of the future lasts before an instant stripped of the essential characteristic of the present, its evanescence. It will never have completed its task as a present, as though reality withdrew from its own reality and left it powerless. In this situation the present can assume nothing, can take on nothing, and thus is an impersonal and anonymous instant.

The immobile instant of a statue owes its acuteness to its non-indifference to duration. It does not belong to eternity. But it is not as though the artist had not been able to give it life. It is just that the life of an artwork does not go beyond the limit of an instant. The artwork does not succeed, is bad, when it does not have that aspiration for life which moved Pygmalion. But it is only an aspiration. The artist has given the statue a lifeless life, a derisory life which is not master of itself, a caricature of life. Its presence does not cover over itself and overflows on all sides,

does not hold in its own hands the strings of the puppet it is. We can attend to the puppet in the personages of a tragedy and laugh at the Comédie-Française. *Every image is already a caricature*. But this caricature turns into something tragic. The same man is indeed a comic poet and a tragic poet, an ambiguity which constitutes the particular magic of poets like Gogol, Dickens, Tchekov – and Molière, Cervantes, and above all, Shakespeare.

This present, impotent to force the future, is fate itself, that fate refractory to the will of the pagan gods, stronger than the rational necessity of natural laws. Fate does not appear in universal necessity. It is a necessity in a free being, a reverting of freedom into necessity, their simultaneity, a freedom that discovers it is a prisoner. Fate has no place in life. The conflict between freedom and necessity in human action appears in reflection: when action is already sinking into the past, man discovers the motifs that necessitated it. But an antinomy is not a tragedy. In the instant of a statue, in its eternally suspended future, the tragic simultaneity of necessity and liberty, can come to pass: the power of freedom congeals into impotence. And here too we should compare art with dreams: the instant of a statue is a nightmare. Not that the artist represents being crushed by fate – beings enter their fate because they are represented. They are enclosed in their fate but just this is the artwork, an event of darkening of being, parallel with its revelation, its truth. It is not that an artwork reproduces a time that has stopped: in the general economy of being, art is the falling movement on the hither side of time, into fate. A novel is not, as Jean Pouillon thinks, a way of reproducing time; it has its own time, it is a unique way for time to temporalize.

We can then understand that time, apparently introduced into images by the non-plastic arts such as music, literature, theatre and cinema, does not shatter the fixity of images. That the characters in a book are committed to the infinite repetition of the same acts and the same thoughts is not simply due to the contingent fact of the narrative, which is exterior to those characters. They can be narrated because their being *resembles* itself, doubles itself and immobilizes. Such a fixity is wholly different from that of concepts, which initiates life, offers reality to our powers, to truth, opens a dialectic. By its reflection in a narrative, being has a non-dialectical fixity, stops dialectics and time.

The characters of a novel are beings that are shut up, prisoners. Their history is never finished, it still goes on, but makes no headway. A novel shuts beings up in a fate despite their freedom. Life solicits the novelist when it seems to him as if it were already something out of a book. Something somehow completed arises in it, as though a whole set of facts were immobilized and formed a series. They are described between two well-determined moments, in the space of a time existence had traversed as through a tunnel. The events related form a *situation* – akin to a plastic ideal. That is what myth is: the plasticity of a history. What we call the artist's choice is the natural selection of facts and traits which are fixed in a rhythm, and transform time into images.

This plastic issue of the literary work was noted by Proust in a particularly admirable page of *The Prisoner*. In speaking of Dostoyevsky, what holds his attention is neither Dostoyevsky's religious ideas, his metaphysics, nor his psychology, but some profiles of girls, a few images: the house of the crime with its stairway and its *dvornik* in *Crime and Punishment*, Grushenka's silhouette in *Brothers Karamazov*. It is as though we are to think that the plastic element of reality is, in the end, the goal of the psychological novel.

Much is said about atmosphere in novels. Criticism itself likes to adopt this meteorological language. Introspection is taken to be a novelist's fundamental procedure, and one supposes that things and nature can enter into a book only when they are enveloped in an atmosphere composed of human emanations. We think, on the contrary, that an exterior vision – of a total exteriority, like the exteriority in rhythm we have described above, where the subject itself is exterior to itself – is the true vision of the novelist. Atmosphere is the very obscurity of images. The poetry of Dickens, who was surely a rudimentary psychologist, the atmosphere of those dusty boarding

schools, the pale light of London offices with their clerks, the antique and second-hand clothing shops, the very characters of Nickleby and Scrooge, only appear in an exterior vision set up as a method. There is no other method. Even the psychological novelist sees his inner life on the outside, not necessarily through the eyes of another, but as one participates in a rhythm or a dream. All the power of the contemporary novel, its art-magic, is perhaps due to this way of seeing inwardness from the outside – which is not all the same as the procedures of behaviorism.

Since Bergson it has become customary to take the continuity of time to be the very essence of duration. The Cartesian teaching of the discontinuity of duration is at most taken as the illusion of a time grasped in its spatial trace, an origin of false problems for minds incapable of conceiving duration. And a metaphor, one that is eminently spatial, of a cross-section made in duration, a photographic metaphor of a snapshot of movement, is accepted as a truism.

We on the contrary have been sensitive to the paradox that an instant can stop. The fact that humanity could have provided itself with art reveals in time the uncertainty of time's continuation and something like a death doubling the impulse of life. The petrification of the instant in the heart of duration – Niobe's punishment – the insecurity of a being which has a presentiment of fate, is the great obsession of the artist's world, the pagan world. Zeno, cruel Zeno – that arrow…

Here we leave the limited problem of art. This presentiment of fate in death subsists, as paganism subsists. To be sure, one need only give oneself a constituted duration to remove from death the power to interrupt. Death is then sublated. To situate it in time is precisely to go beyond it, to already find oneself on the other side of the abyss, to have it behind oneself. Death *qua* nothingness is the death of the other, death for the survivor. The time of *dying* itself cannot give itself the other shore. What is unique and poignant in this instant is due to the fact that it cannot pass. In *dying*, the horizon of the future is given, but the future as a promise of a new present is refused; one is in the interval, forever an interval. The characters of certain tales by Edgar Allen Poe must have found themselves in this empty interval. A threat appears to them in the approach of such an empty interval; no move can be made to retreat from its approach, but this approach can never end. This is the anxiety which in other tales is prolonged like a fear of being buried alive. It is as though death were never dead enough, as though parallel with the duration of the living ran the eternal duration of the interval – the *meanwhile*.

Art brings about just this duration in the interval, in that sphere which a being is able to traverse, but in which its shadow is immobilized. The eternal duration of the interval in which a statue is immobilized differs radically from the eternity of a concept; it is the meanwhile, never finished, still enduring – something inhuman and monstrous.

Inertia and matter do not account for the peculiar death of the shadow. Inert matter already refers to a substance to which its qualities cling. In a statue matter knows the death of idols. The proscription of images is truly the supreme command of monotheism, a doctrine that overcomes fate, that creation and revelation in reverse.

For philosophical criticism

Art then lets go of the prey for the shadow.

But in introducing the death of each instant into being, it effects its eternal duration in the meanwhile, has there its uniqueness, its value. Its value then is ambiguous – unique because it is impossible to go beyond it, because, being unable to end, it cannot go toward the *better*. It does not have the quality of the living instant which is open to the salvation of becoming, in which it can end and be surpassed. The value of this instant is thus made of its misfortune. This sad value is indeed the beautiful of modern art, opposed to the happy beauty of classical art.

On the other hand, art, essentially disengaged, constitutes, in a world of initiative and responsibility, a dimension of evasion.

Here we rejoin the most common and ordinary experience of aesthetic enjoyment. It is one of the reasons that bring out the value of art. Art brings into the world the obscurity of fate, but it especially brings the irresponsibility that charms as a lightness and grace. It frees. To make or to appreciate a novel and a picture is to no longer have to conceive, is to renounce the effort of science, philosophy, and action. Do not speak, do not reflect, admire in silence and in peace – such are the counsels of wisdom satisfied before the beautiful. Magic, recognized everywhere as the devil's part, enjoys an incomprehensible tolerance in poetry. Revenge is gotten on wickedness by producing its caricature, which is to take from it its reality without annihilating it; evil powers are conjured by filling the world with idols which have mouths but do not speak. It is as though ridicule killed, as though everything really can end in songs. We find an appeasement when, beyond the invitations to comprehend and act, we throw ourselves into the rhythm of a reality which solicits only its admission into a book or a painting. Myth takes the place of mystery. The world to be built is replaced by the essential completion of its shadow. This is not the disinterestedness of contemplation but of irresponsibility. The poet exiles himself from the city. From this point of view, the value of the beautiful is relative. There is something wicked and egoist and cowardly in artistic enjoyment. There are times when one can be ashamed of it, as of feasting during a plague.

Art then is not committed by virtue of being art. But for this reason art is not the supreme value of civilization, and it is not forbidden to conceive a stage in which it will be reduced to a source of pleasure – which one cannot contest without being ridiculous – having its place, but only a place, in man's happiness. Is it presumptuous to denounce the hypertrophy of art in our times when, for almost everyone, it is identified with spiritual life?

But all this is true for art separated from the criticism that integrates the inhuman work of the artist into the human world. Criticism already detaches it from its irresponsibility by envisaging its technique. It treats the artist as a man at work. Already in inquiring after the influences he undergoes it links this disengaged and proud man to real history. Such criticism is still preliminary. It does not attack the artistic event as such, that obscuring of being in images, that stopping of being in the meanwhile. The value of images for philosophy lies in their position between two times and their ambiguity. Philosophy discovers, beyond the enchanted rock on which it stands, all its possibles swarming about it. It grasps them by interpretation. This is to say that the artwork can and must be treated as a myth: the immobile statue has to be put in movement and made to speak. Such an enterprise is not the same as a simple reconstruction of the original from the copy. Philosophical exegesis will measure the distance that separates myth from real being, and will become conscious of the creative event itself, an event which eludes cognition, which goes from being to being by skipping over the intervals of the meanwhile. Myth is then at the same time untruth and the source of philosophical truth, if indeed philosophical truth involves a dimension of intelligibility proper to it, not content with laws and causes which connect beings to one another, but searching for the work of being itself.

Criticism, in interpreting, will choose and will limit. But if, *qua* choice, it remains on the hither side of the world which is fixed in art, it reintroduces that world into the intelligible world in which it stands, and which is the true homeland of the mind. The most lucid writer finds himself in the world bewitched by its images. He speaks in enigmas, by allusions, by suggestion, in equivocations, as though he moved in a world of shadows, as though he lacked the force to arouse realities, as though he could not go to them without wavering, as though, bloodless and awkward, he always committed himself further than he had decided to do, as though he spills half the water he is bringing us. The most forewarned, the most lucid writer none the less plays

the fool. The interpretation of criticism speaks in full self-possession, frankly, through concepts, which are like the muscles of the mind.

Modern literature, disparaged for its intellectualism (which, none the less goes back to Shakespeare, the Molière of *Don Juan*, Goethe, Dostoyevsky), certainly manifests a more and more clear awareness of this fundamental insufficiency of artistic idolatry. In this intellectualism the artist refuses to be only an artist, not because he wants to defend a thesis or cause, but because he needs to interpret his myths himself. Perhaps the doubts that, since the renaissance, the alleged death of God has put in souls have compromised for the artist the reality of the henceforth inconsistent models, have imposed on him the onus of finding his models anew in the heart of his production itself, and made him believe he had a mission to be creator and revealer. The task of criticism remains essential, even if God was not dead, but only exiled. But we cannot here broach the 'logic' of the philosophical exegesis of art; that would demand a broadening of the intentionally limited perspective of this study. For one would have to introduce the perspective of the relation with the other without which being could not be told in its reality, that is, in its time.

Translated by Alphonso Lingis

Notes

All notes are by the translator unless otherwise indicated.

1 Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1962, p. 44.
2 Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Literature and Existentialism*, trans. Bernard Frechtman, New York: Citadel, 1964.
3 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 405. Also 'On the Essence of Truth', trans. John Sallis in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, New York: Harper and Row, 1993, pp. 127–30.
4 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Imagination, a Psychology of Imagination*, trans. Bernard Frechtman, New York: Washington Square Press, 1966.
5 Editor [Séan Hand]: Jean Giraudoux (1882–1944) wrote modern versions of classical tragedy which emphasized the human qualities inherent in classical myth.
6 Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978, p. 17.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Emmanuel Levinas in English

The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology (1930), trans. A. Orianne, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1985.
On Escape (1935), trans. B.G. Bergo, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
Existence and Existents (1947), trans. A. Lingis, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978.
Time and the Other (1948), trans. R. Cohen, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1990.
Discovering Existence with Husserl (1949), trans. R.A. Cohen and M.B. Smith, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998.
Totality and Infinity (1961), trans. A. Lingis, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987.
Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism (1963), trans. S. Hand, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
Nine Talmudic Readings (1968, 1977), trans. A. Aronowicz, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.
Humanism of the Other (1972), trans. N. Poller, Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2003.
Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence (1974), trans. A. Lingis, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981.

Proper Names (1976), trans. M.B. Smith, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.
Ethics and Infinity (1982), trans. R. Cohen, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985.
Of God Who Comes to Mind (1982), trans. B.G. Bergo, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures (1982), trans. G.D. Mole, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
Outside the Subject (1987), trans. M.B. Smith, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.
In the Time of the Nations (1988), trans. M.B. Smith, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other (1993), trans. B. Harshav and M.B. Smith, New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
God, Death, and Time (1993), trans. B.G. Bergo, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
Unforeseen History (1994), trans. N. Poller, Chicago: Illinois University Press, 2003.
Alterity and Transcendence (1995), trans. M.B. Smith, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
New Talmudic Readings (1995), trans. R.A. Cohen, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1999.
Collected Philosophical Papers, trans. A. Lingis, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987.
The Levinas Reader, ed. S. Hand, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.
Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings, eds A.T. Peperzak, S. Critchley, and R. Bernasconi, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.
Is it Righteous to Be? Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas, ed. J. Robbins, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.

Further reading

Introductions to Levinas's philosophy, and the centrality of ethics to it, are offered by Bergo (2007), Critchley (2002), Davis (1996), Hand (2008), Hutchens (2004), Peperzak (2005), and Perpich (2008). For studies of his aesthetics, see Brogan (2001), Chinnery (2003), Glowacka (2002), Haney (1999), Iyer (2001), Peters (1997, 2001, 2005), Rapaport (1996), Robbins (1995), Ross (1996), Toumayan (2004), Vassilicos (2003), and Wehrs (2001), with Attridge (1999), Peperzak (1995), Robbins (1999), and Thomas (2000) concentrating upon his literary aesthetics. The impact of Levinas's writing for contemporary philosophy is explored by Bernasconi (1987), Campbell (1994), Chanter (1988), Cornell (1993), Critchley (1992, 2009), Llewelyn (1998), Villarmea (1999), and Watson (1988). For a range of critical responses, see Critchely and Bernasconi (2002).

D. Attridge, 'Innovation, literature, ethics: relating to the Other', *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 1999, vol. 114, pp. 20–31.
B. Bergo, 'Emmanuel Levinas', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2007. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/levinas/ (accessed 1 May 2010).
R. Bernasconi, 'Deconstruction and the possibility of ethics', in J. Sallis (ed.), *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp. 122–39.
M.J. Brogan, 'Nausea and the experience of the '*il y a*': Sartre and Levinas on brute existence', *Philosophy Today*, 2001, vol. 45, pp. 144–53.
D. Campbell, 'The deterritorialization of responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and ethics after the end of philosophy', *Alternatives*, 1994, vol. 19, pp. 455–84.
T. Chanter, 'Feminism and the Other', in R. Bernasconi and D. Wood (eds), *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, London: Routledge, 1988, pp. 32–56.
A. Chinnery, 'Aesthetics of surrender: Levinas and the disruption of agency in moral education', *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 2003, vol. 22, pp. 5–17.
D. Cornell, 'The philosophy of the limit: crossings of Levinas, Derrida, and Adorno: horizons of nonviolence', *Diacritics*, 1993, vol. 23, pp. 12–41.
S. Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.
———, 'Introduction', in S. Critchley and R. Bernasconi (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 1–32.
———, *Ethics-Politics-Subjectivity: Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought*, London: Verso, 2009.
S. Critchley and R. Bernasconi (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
C. Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Polity, 1996.

D. Glowacka, 'Disappearing traces: Emmanuel Levinas, Ida Fink's literary testimony, and Holocaust art', in D. Glowacka (ed.), *Between Ethics and Aesthetics: Crossing the Boundaries*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002, pp. 97–115.

S. Hand, *Emmanuel Levinas*, London: Routledge, 2008.

D.P. Haney, 'Aesthetics and ethics in Gadamer, Levinas, and romanticism: problems of *phronesis* and *techne*', *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 1999, vol. 114, pp. 32–45.

B.C. Hutchens, *Levinas: A Guide for the Perplexed*, London: Continuum, 2004.

L. Iyer, 'The sphinx's gaze: art, friendship, and the philosophical in Blanchot and Levinas', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 2001, vol. 39, pp. 189–206.

J. Llewelyn, 'In the name of philosophy', *Research in Phenomenology*, 1998, vol. 28, pp. 37–54.

A. Peperzak, *Ethics as First Philosophy: The Significance of Emmanuel Levinas for Philosophy, Literature and Religion*, New York: Routledge, 1995.

———, *To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*, West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2005.

D. Perpich, *The Ethics of Emmanuel Levinas*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.

G. Peters, 'The rhythm of alterity: Levinas and aesthetics', *Radical Philosophy*, 1997, vol. 82, pp. 9–16.

———, 'Against integration: distinguishing art theory and aesthetics', *International Journal of Art & Design Education*, 2001, vol. 20, pp. 180–94.

———, *Irony and Singularity: Aesthetic Education from Kant to Levinas*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

H. Rapaport, *Is There Truth in Art?*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.

J. Robbins, 'Aesthetic totality and ethical infinity: Levinas on art', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 1995, vol. 35, pp. 66–79.

———, *Altered Reading: Levinas and Literature*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

S.D. Ross, *The Gift of Beauty: The Good as Art*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.

S.R. Thomas, 'Reflections on Levinas and literature', *Phenomenological Inquiry*, 2000, vol. 24, pp. 81–91.

A.P. Toumayan, *Encountering the Other: The Artwork and the Problem of Difference in Blanchot and Levinas*, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2004.

B. Vassilicos, 'The time of images and images of time: Lévinas and Sartre', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 2003, vol. 34, pp. 168–83.

S. Villarmea, 'The provocation of Levinas for feminism', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 1999, vol. 6, pp. 291–304.

S. Watson, 'Levinas, the ethics of deconstruction, and the remainder of the sublime', *Man and World*, 1988, vol. 1, pp. 35–64.

D.R. Wehrs, 'Levinas and Sterne: from the ethics of the face to the aesthetics of unrepresentability', in M. New, R. Bernasconi, and R.A. Cohen (eds), *In Proximity: Emmanuel Levinas and the Eighteenth Century*, Lubbock, Texas: Texas Tech University Press, 2001, pp. 141–65.

Chapter 7

MIKEL DUFRENNE

INTRODUCTION

Of all the French phenomenologists, Mikel Dufrenne (1910–95) offers the most systematic account of the relationship between phenomenology and art. He has written three books on aesthetics: *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* (1953), *La Poétique* (1963), and the three-volume *In the Presence of the Sensuous* (1967, 1976, 1981). Written some years prior to publication as his principal dissertation at the Sorbonne, the *Phenomenology* lays the foundations of Dufrenne's aesthetic theory. His main ambition in the book is to specify what an aesthetic object is and how it can be distinguished from other kinds of objects. The work is vital to any appreciation of Dufrenne's *oeuvre* since it contains the first, full articulation of his thesis that 'the a priori is revealed only in the a posteriori'.[1] 'The World of the Aesthetic Object' is from the *Phenomenology* and draws on Kant and Heidegger to show how the a posteriori revealing of the a priori defines an aesthetic object.

What distinguishes an artwork from other forms of representation, Dufrenne claims, is that it *expresses a world*. While an artwork is like a diagram or a sign or a news report in that it *re*-presents for us part of the world, what is unique to the artwork is that it establishes the conditions and interactions which allow the various material elements making up the work to speak to one another, to become significant, to have meaning. In other words, it establishes the conditions which allow representation to occur.

How does this count as the expression of a 'world'? Dufrenne's use of the term bears comparison with Heidegger's proposal that the work of art draws a world from the earth, and refers, with Heidegger, to the Kantian project of demonstrating the conditions of possibility of experience. This is the origin of Dufrenne's interest in the a priori–a posteriori relationship: identifying the structures which have to be in place a priori (prior to experience) for there to be any experience and the possibility of knowledge from experience (a posteriori) at all. The world, Dufrenne reminds us, is not a thing; we don't experience the world as an object among others, like a tree or a table or a house. Rather, our sense of 'world', he asserts (acknowledging Kant and Heidegger), is a correlate of the unity which the imagination projects as a horizon for experience. 'World' refers to the sense of objectivity which follows as a result of subjective experience having the same defining conditions as external appearances. Thus, the artwork expresses a world in the sense that it lets us see the structure of experience. Because the artwork is a form of representation which does not take representation for granted but actually deals with how certain marks or affects can become representation, it stands as the sensuous, a posteriori expression of a priori conditions.

Note

1 M. Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, trans. E.S. Casey, A.A. Anderson, W. Domingo and L. Jacobson, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973, p.492.

■ ■ ■

THE WORLD OF THE AESTHETIC OBJECT

MIKEL DUFRENNE

We now proceed to confirm and develop what has already been suggested by the confrontation between the aesthetic object and the ordinary signifying object. The aesthetic object signifies neither in the manner of a history or physics book nor as a signal would. The aesthetic object addresses itself neither to the will so as to inform it nor to the intellect so as to instruct it. It *shows* and sometimes shows only itself, without referring to anything real. In any case, the aesthetic object does not claim to imitate the real (even if some aesthetic theories prescribe such imitation). When the authentic artist draws his inspiration from the real, he does so in order to measure himself against it and to remake it. Even when he celebrates the Creation he competes with it or, like Claudel, at least does not hide the fact that he collaborates with and completes it. In signifying, the aesthetic object does not exist to serve the world. It is, rather, the source of a world which is its own. The justification for speaking of 'world' here will be given below; at present we are content with describing it.

What is this world? Is it only a portion of the real world transposed into the work in such a way that the work represents it? Is the world of Balzac only the world of the Nucingens, the Vautrins, or the Chouans? Is the world of Rouault that of clowns, judges, and Crucifixions? And then what would be the world of Mozart or Chopin? When we name the world of the aesthetic object by its creator, we emphasize the presence of a certain style, a unique way of treating a subject, of making the sensuous serve representation. The Romanesque and the Gothic master builders have the same object; they both wish to erect God's house. But do Saint-Séverin and Sainte-Chapelle produce the same impression? How many painters have treated the Crucifixion? From Rembrandt to Rubens, it is the same Christ, but it is not the same Christianity. On the other hand, when Giraudoux shows us Bardini or Electra, when Bach writes cantatas or a concerto, when Goya paints a festival or a nightmare, it is to the same world that they give us access.[1] Sometimes it is even by means of that world that we identify the work, as surely as we do by the style, since the world is that which the style expresses.

These considerations suffice to inform us that the creator's world cannot be described according to norms valid for the objective world or even for the represented world. The world of the creator is expressed and not represented. It is not without relation to the represented world, but it is not identical with it, since two different subjects can participate equally in the same world, as when Phaedra and Athalie, who live before us on the stage in two different worlds – in two different plays – nevertheless communicate in the same world of Racine. It is not easy to see what this world is, yet we are immediately sensitive to its presence as soon as the aesthetic object introduces it to us. It is not a world of identifiable objects. One can neither explore it nor survey it, because one does not have to take distance into consideration with respect to it. In truth, it is less a world than the atmosphere of a world, in the sense that we say an atmosphere is tense or lively. Thus it is a matter of a certain quality of objects or of beings, but a quality which does not belong to them in their own right, since it is not they that bring it about.

The quality in question is like a supervening or impersonal principle in accordance with which we say that there is an electric atmosphere or, as Trénet sang, that there is joy in the air. This principle is embodied in individuals or in things. It is somewhat like the collective consciousness which governs individual consciousness in times of agitation. Whether or not it is a principle of explanation, it is at any rate a reality that we feel keenly when we come into contact with the group from which it emanates. We have much the same experience in a dark forest. It seems to us that individual shadows are not the result of shade, but, on the contrary, that the shadows create the leafy summits and the entanglement of underbrush along with the entire vegetable mass in its damp mystery. The forest prevents us from seeing the tree, and the forest itself is seen only through its atmosphere. But here the atmosphere refers to the real world of men or things. To what does it refer in the aesthetic object? It is not a quality of the real world but of the object itself. The world of the aesthetic object is a world interior to the object. It is as such that we must describe it, leaving until later the examination of its coefficient of reality and its truth with respect to the real world. At the very moment when it proposes the real, the aesthetic object seems to exclude it or to convert it into its own substance. We become engaged in its world only by being diverted from *the* world, even if we do not leave it altogether and if the environment is always *mitgemeint* [cointended]. On the one hand, it is necessary that perception not degenerate into a dream, and there is perception only if we are in the world. On the other hand, the aesthetic object itself must be real in order to thrust itself upon us and to draw us into the world which it opens to us and which is its highest signification.

(a) The represented world

In order to understand the world of the aesthetic object, we must grasp it in its opposition but also in its quite limited relationship to the world as strictly represented. Are we not tempted to identify this latter world immediately with the subject of the work? Let us, therefore, first consider the represented world.[2] At first glance it thrusts itself upon our attention and appears to be the very substance of the work. But does it truly create a world by itself? Does the represented object raise itself to that height? The nature of the world, in fact, is to be open and to refer continually from object to object, extending all limits. The world is the inexhaustible reservoir of being which is attested to quantitatively by the infinite nature of space and time, but which is also symbolized by the myths of an inexhaustible creative power or of an eternal return of forms and kinds. Undoubtedly, the world can be adumbrated by the most humble object as soon as I realize that I cannot coincide with it entirely, that in its very presence it escapes me in some way, and that it is joined to something beyond itself which I am never able to reach or wholly master. In this respect, when the aesthetic object is considered as a thing, it attests to the world. If the world is to take shape in my sight, I must undertake to explore it or let my gaze lose itself at the horizon. I must have some contact with the unlimited. But does the object as aesthetically represented furnish a represented world? Yes and no. Even if the representation does not imitate, it tends to make the object leave its framework, to confer on this object the power of evoking the world in which the object is able to take its place. The real object, in contrast, possesses a plenitude by which it accords with the world as with that which surrounds and extends it.

I read a novel. Some characters evolve before me who have, by virtue of art, a certain density of being and constancy. These characters are present to me as is the hidden side of a cube, which ensures that the cube is more than a superficial spectacle and exists inviscerated in a perceptual field. The characters themselves live in a world which I experience as spatial and temporal density and as a peculiar style.[3] The art of the novelist may, however, take many different paths. It can, for instance, represent the world of things and events, the cosmic and human context, as an independent and

primary reality – a sort of Great Being à la Comte, where individuals are sometimes caught in a trap, receiving their fate according to the place they occupy. The classical novel unfolds in this way, even if it depicts the context only in light strokes and reserves the bulk of the work for psychological design. But the novelist can, in contrast, according to a totally different perspective, subordinate the context to the individuals or to one special individual whose consciousness becomes a center of reference which is itself referred to no other. The contemporary novel most often operates in this way. Finally, one can, as it were, merge the two perspectives, obtaining a world which has a cosmic density through an entanglement of diverse aims, as if its substance were made of many adventures, decisions, fears, and hopes. Such appears to be the special unity of Dos Passos and Sartre. At any rate, there are no heroes except those engaged in a world. To conceive a hero of a novel is not only to recognize in him the opacity, the fullness, the secret property of a consciousness, it is also to grasp him in relation to a world which is both a correlative and a destiny, according to the ambiguity of the human condition. The world is suggested in the work by scattered indications whose synthesis we continually effect. This synthesis is realized, not in the manner of a judgment which collects and compares, but because each indication offers more than it is, as when a detail set apart within a whole is corroborated by other details. Yet the whole is never reducible to the sum of the parts, as Balzac sometimes seems to believe. It is in this sense that the indications in a novel are truly expressive, always saying more than their literal meaning. They are the inverse of clear and distinct ideas in which the meaning is rigorously coextensive with the signs. It is possible that the novelist's art – indeed, that of all artists – consists of choosing, of cutting out as much as of adding, for he is not interested in the prodigality of appearances or the indefiniteness of horizons. He retains only that which interests him. What he retains must suffice to allow us to reach a world of which we easily accept the fact that certain aspects are clear and others obscure, but which has the shape of a world all the same. This mixture of the implicit and explicit exists, moreover, in the image of the perceived world.

The represented world also possesses, in its own fashion, the spatiotemporal structure of the perceived world. Space and time here fill a dual function. They serve both to open up a world and to ordain it objectively by creating a world common to the characters and the readers. Even if they are centered in a character who experiences them, they also have meaning for the reader. They possess enough objectivity for the represented world to be identifiable and objective in the manner of the real world of which it is the image, although the represented world can be presented as lived and dominated by a central subjectivity with which the novelist identifies (and does not merely consign to a place in an impersonal world). This world is still subject to the requirements of representation and must appear objective enough for the reader to become oriented there. In the novel, space and time transfer the objectivity of the real to the represented elements. In fact, they appear according to the norms of objectivity, even when there is a flying carpet or seven-league boots to make light of distance. These distances are measurable, and we know it. Paris is at the same distance for heroes of novels and for the real traveler. Undoubtedly that space can be qualified by the restlessness of the hero as well as by his means of locomotion, but, as in the case of the real traveler, it is from an objective given that we understand the restlessness or that we appreciate the airplane he takes. Similarly, the time of the represented world imitates the time of the real world, to the point of reproducing it in the novels which explore the interior monologue, where the time of the reading and the time of the story recounted coincide in a certain fashion.[4] Even the time of legends and myths has the aspect of real time, as when heroes are engaged in adventures. Even more often the time of the novel makes reference to the time of objective history. The story unfolds between dates which exist on a calendar, referring to events which are localized in both history and geography.

There is at the least a sort of osmosis proceeding from the real world to the represented world, even for novelists who have abandoned the naturalistic illusion. Nevertheless, it will be said that the techniques of expressing time vary considerably and that certain novelists make free with

objective time. This is certainly so, but it is not because such novelists abandon the time of the real world and claim to invent another time for the world which they represent. Rather, it is because the notion of a real time is itself ambiguous and gives rise to treatments and explanations which are quite diverse. Between objective time and lived time, between time-space and time-duration, the choice is always open. At least time can be described and recounted according to these two perspectives. One perspective orders time according to the causality of things, and the other orders time according to the spontaneity of a consciousness. Thus the novelist is able to choose the most appropriate means to indicate time, depending on whether he writes a story of a consciousness or a story of the world. Wherever he puts the accent, he strives to restore to time, within the world that he represents, the allure which it possesses for him in the real world. And he cannot entirely sacrifice the expression of objective time. Even if the time of the story is nothing but an objectified time and consequently is unable to claim ontological priority, it is nonetheless the means by which we gain access to a subjective time and to a necessary aspect of duration as well. A novelist like Faulkner, who abuses chronology (symbolized by Quentin's watch-smashing in *The Sound and the Fury*) in order to reveal the inanity of a present which is always the replica of a past and has meaning only in reference to the past, cannot prevent the reader from putting time in order so that he can recognize himself in it and give an objective meaning to the lived categories of before and after. Moreover, the novelist himself must provide the means for this act of ordering, e.g., by utilizing grammatical moods. It is due to our ability to reconstitute an objective structure of lived time that what is represented in a novel appears to have the density of a world.

The same holds true for all the representational arts. Each one makes certain privileged objects comply with an over-all scheme and places behind these objects backdrop which gives them, in contrast, more consistency and at the same time the indeterminacy of a world. Undoubtedly this backdrop itself can be minutely represented, as in the novels of Balzac, in early Flemish canvases, and in palaces surrounded by gardens in the French style. Such art neglects only what is intentionally omitted. The same precision attests to an effort to associate the world with the represented object in order to force the world into the structure of the work. One may say that this is a naïve effort. Does not a uniform background, an Elizabethan setting, suffice? Why encumber the aesthetic object and make it compete with the real? The setting [*le décor*], particularly in the theater, serves a double function. One function can be emphasized more than the other, but neither should be wholly neglected. The setting surrounds and delimits the aesthetic object in its sensuous body, and it gives to the represented object the aureole of a world.

In drama, as in the novel, the characters who live before me are also bound up in a world. In Racine's play, Phaedra, the daughter of Minos and Pasiphaé, is caught up in that dark Dionysiac universe in which Theseus, the heroic founder of cities who is freed from the Labyrinth, triumphs, but which condemns her to the infernal gods. Not only do I know of this world: I see it. Phaedra moves in a setting, but the setting signifies much more than it represents. Behind the palace suggested by a porch, a city exists for me from which noises sometimes arise in the wings. Indeed, all of Greece is present, as well as the distant shores – though no more distant for me than for Phaedra – where the survivor Theseus disembarks. But it is not necessary – in fact, it is impossible – that this fabulous geography be offered to the eye. It suffices if it is suggested to the mind by the indications of the text. Thus the signification remains for the most part confined to spoken words. One may here establish a comparison between the setting in the theater and in the film. In the theater, the words are what order the setting and give it its profound truth. It is not at all necessary that the setting create the illusion of reality, since it need only please the eye. Thus it need not compete with the dramatic object, for it is not empowered to constitute in itself an autonomous pictorial or architectural aesthetic object. However lively and pleasant the colors are, they do not possess the dignity of colors in an authentic painting. One covers the set

with distempered paint, using the same elementary technique as the house painter. Moreover, the scene designer has no right to use stone, only cardboard and stucco. The setting, in principle, signifies only through the text which it is entrusted to illustrate.[5] In other words, the world of the dramatic work is as much presented to the mind as it is to the senses. It suffices to make only a discreet allusion to the senses, filling them up effortlessly rather than exciting them. For the scenery must not divert the eye from the actor. The scenery acts as a costume for him rather than as a geographical landmark. One of its functions can be seen in the kind of scenery which Christian Bérard composed for *Don Juan* and which involved the division of technical space to regulate the movements of the actors and the unfolding of the action. The setting is to the actor what the stadium is to the athlete or the race track to the horseman. At the same time, the setting encloses the space of the stage, separating it from the wings more strictly than from the audience. The setting is to the play what the frame is to the painting, though it also continues to function as the background. This is particularly evident in the ballet, where the dancers create, through their posture and their grouping, plastic shapes which often serve as a background for a solo or a duet and which themselves need a framework in order to be consolidated and to produce their effect. The setting is the framework of the performance [*représentation*] before becoming the framework of the represented object. It delimits the choreographic space before opening the space of the world where the action unfolds in the ballet. A few curtains suffice for this delimitation, unless the setting is more intimately associated with the aesthetic object.

The setting in the case of film is different. In fact, certain shots can stand out like a tableau – indeed, are sometimes specifically inspired by a pictorial work, so that the setting is first of all the means of framing the composition. Care in composition is required more or less explicitly in all visual art – architecture is the chief example. But the vocation of the cinema that corresponds to its technical possibilities is one that uses all the resources of the image in order to extend the field of representation to the dimensions of the world. Then the represented world, especially in exterior shots, gains the breadth which Van Eyck or Breughel present in their painting without their precise detail. In film, the setting assumes more responsibility than the spoken word for presenting the represented world, since the spoken word cannot have the same importance on the screen that it does on the stage. That which the text says, the screen is always able to show. This does not mean, however, that the value of the film's scenery is measured by its ability to create illusion. In fact, the cinema has taken over all the tricks of perspective that painting has abandoned. *Trompe-l'œil* is king in the cinema. The height of film art is all too often to make the corner of a studio hold a city. It uses miniatures of houses rapidly diminishing in size to obtain a truncated perspective. If necessary, it places extras in the background, among the houses with reduced dimensions – small children ridiculously dressed up in mustaches. Are these artifices still art? In this respect, film, so often eager to imitate the theater, may have something to learn from the latter. Without going to the extent of installing a prompter's box in a corner of the image, film should remember that art must never be ashamed of its medium and of its limits. Film can enlarge our vision without having to deceive us.

In other words, even when it is used to connect a world with the represented action, the setting must be selective and not try to show too much. Moreover, it always acts as some sort of frame. The setting limits the world which it evokes to the dimensions of the aesthetic object, closing it off as much as opening it up. Thus, if the represented world is an image of the real world, it is an image which is inevitably and voluntarily mutilated. That which the work gives us of the real world is only what is necessary to situate the characters or to illuminate the action. Its purpose is not so much to represent a world as to single out some determinate and meaningful object from within it, making this object its property and taking us back to it untiringly. In practical perception the horizon is like a challenge which we must take up, or like a question to which knowledge will provide an answer through an investigation that gradually moves it back.

But the world which is the backdrop of the aesthetic object, instead of soliciting our attention, directs it immediately to the foreground, to the essential. Crete, reeking with the blood of the Minotaur, interests us only as a means of understanding Phaedra. The city which spreads out toward an enormous horizon in Van Eyck's *Madonna with Chancellor Rollin* requires only a sidelong look from us. Like the landscape of high rocks behind the *Mona Lisa*, the city is there only to offer the Madonna the same homage that we are supposed to give her. Thus the represented world is not truly a world by itself in the sense that the real world is. It cannot compete with the real world insofar as: *(a)* the represented world claims (and we agree to apply to it) the norm of objectivity; *(b)* one seeks in the represented world the image or the interpretation of the real world; and *(c)* the real world itself is conceived as an objective world which is the measure of all objectivity. If the aesthetic object offers us a world, it is in another manner and according to a mode which should be common to all of the arts, representational or not.

(b) The expressed world

The represented world does not allow us to speak yet of a world of the work which is original and singular. Undoubtedly it is a world distinct from the real world, with all the distance which separates the real from the represented. But it still imitates the real world, even if it is fantastic, since it always forms identifiable objects with the help of elements borrowed from the real, as studies on creative imagination have clearly shown. That is why works which do not raise themselves to the level of expression exhaust their entire ambition in copying the real. In contrast, if the work shuns imitation and constitutes an original creation on the level of representation itself, it is through its desire to be expressive, and, as we shall see, it is the expressed world which animates the represented world.

Moreover, the represented world is not truly a world. It is not self-sufficient; it is indeterminate. This is not only because it is represented and not real but also because it is incomplete. The work by itself affords us only sparse information about itself. However much we may know about this world and however precise our descriptions of it, there is always a beyond, just as there is a third dimension absent from a painting which the imagination tries vainly to fill out by lengthening and enriching the appearance. Undoubtedly this indeterminacy is characteristic of the world. It is that which escapes apprehension and cannot be totalized. It is the possibility of a perpetual progress or a labor of Sisyphus. Space and time, which form its structure, are the source of its indeterminacy. But we must add something else to this negative cosmology. What is the source of our ability to speak of a world if we are doomed to this infinite disorder, continually forced to relate one object to another? We must somehow obtain the idea of a possible totality, a unity for the indefinite. Within the objective world which science seeks to master, we may think that the idea of such unity comes from the very principle of unification. That which assures the unity of the world – that which allows one to think of a world – is the fact that all things are equally subsumed under the conditions of objectivity. What determines the indeterminate is, at the least, the fact that it is indefinitely determinable. Is this fact the source of the idea of world? We shall see. In any event, it cannot be the source for the idea of a world proper to the aesthetic object. We do not perceive the aesthetic object under the sign of determinism, that is, by confining to the understanding the task of pursuing indefinitely the unification of the world. It is deficient works – the ones that offer only an incoherent representation – which hand over to the understanding the chore of ordering the elements which they offer. Genuine works, even when they baffle the understanding, bear in themselves the principle of their unity. Their unity is both the perceived unity of the appearance as rigorously composed and the felt unity of a world represented by the appearance or, rather, emanating from it in such a way that what is represented itself signifies totality and is converted into a world.

What is the source of the unity by which the expressed is able to assume the shape of a world? We already know, from the fact that the consciousness of the artist is expressed through it, since there can be expression only of a subjectivity (and that is why we are able to identify the world of the aesthetic object and the world of the creator; the creator as revealed by the work is the guarantee of what the work reveals). The unity of an atmosphere is thus the unity of a *Weltanschauung*; its coherence is the coherence of a characteristic or quality. This *Weltanschauung* is not a doctrine but rather the vital metaphysical element in all men, the way of being in the world which reveals itself in a personality. We are not surprised that it can turn itself into a world, the world of an aesthetic object, since each man already radiates a world. There is a nimbus of joy around the joyous man. We say of another that he exudes boredom. The effect is such that ordinary objects can change their appearance through the mere presence of someone. But while expression ordinarily remains indistinct, its world blurred, the aesthetic object expresses the world of the artist with greater power and precision and gives it bulk and unity.

Therefore, a higher principle of unity comes to the aesthetic object from the fact that it is capable of expression, that is, from the fact that it signifies not only by representing but, through that which it represents, by producing in the perceiver a certain impression. Thus the aesthetic object manifests a certain quality which words cannot translate but which communicates itself in arousing a feeling. This quality proper to the work – to the works of a single creator or to a single style – is a world atmosphere. How is it produced? Through the ensemble from which it emanates. All the elements of the represented world conspire to produce it, according to their mode of representation. Take the novel, for example. It evokes a world. In its way, the novel establishes a setting in which characters evolve (with the reservation that, except in certain classical novels that are not entirely set free from the theater, the setting is only for us; for the character, it is a context to which he is dialectically bound). But the setting, the characters, and the events which are recounted, with varying degrees of emphasis, are chosen by the novelist, set apart from the undetermined story or outline in order to produce a certain total effect. Moreover, the precise intention which presides over that choice matters little. Whether the novelist wished to demonstrate the motives of a character in showing the hero subject to various tests, wished to sketch a sort of fresco, or simply wished to tell a story, the work, if it is successful, manifests a unity which transcends the detail of the representations. In one instance, the unity will proceed less from the unity of a character than from the unity of a life, a unity resulting from the indefinable resemblance between the actions of one man and thus between the situations in which he is caught and the visages which the world offers to him. In another instance, the unity will arise from a certain allure, from a rhythm common to events, from a style of the world as creating a style of life and not the converse – as in the swarming of bewildered insects in the incoherent universe of Dos Passos, or in the indifferent cruelty of Zola's universe regulated by laws which no Providence promulgates or amends, or in the proliferation of a voluntaristic world in Balzac's works. In still another case, the unity will proceed from the very rhythm of the story, as in the ardent or peaceful breathing of a world which hardens into fatality in the short stories of de Maupassant. In every instance, the choice of the novelist is justified by an identical result, that of producing a certain total effect like that which painters obtain (so obviously that there is no need to stress it) by the rigor with which they harmonize the values and colors of a composition.

What we have said of the setting can now be reconsidered in the light of the idea of the work's unity. The scenery in a play contributes to creating a world, first by enlarging the perspectives of the presentation, by giving a horizon to the represented objects as well as a framework for the actors. But, while assuming this indispensable function, the scenery is also able to combine more directly with the work by participating in its expressive function. Consider a setting like that of Bérard for *Les Bonnes*. Because it is presented as stuffy, sumptuous, and suffocating, an apartment is able to become the principal personage in a play. So, too, is a forest filled with mystery, especially when contrasted

with the liberating sea, as Valentine Hugo has demonstrated in the case of *Pelléas et Mélisande*.[6] In such instances, the affective quality of the world matters more than its geography. Things are no longer a mere locus of action, they truly have a meaning by themselves – a meaning which is not their utilitarian meaning. They are aestheticized. The scenery ceases to decorate because it has undertaken the responsibility of expressing the world rather than leaving it to the care of the text. (However, the scenery must remain scenery and avoid deception; itself aestheticized, it belongs to the world of the work and not to the natural world.) The same is true for the architectural setting. If it is the real world which is annexed by the monument, it is more easily converted into an expressed world than into a represented world. For the architectural monument introduces us into a world of its own. Undoubtedly, the elements of this world are less easily distinguished from one another than those of the world of the play. Just as the real mingles with the aesthetic, so that which is represented – for example, the architectural signification, the historical context evoked by the style – mingles with what is expressed: nobility, fervor, majesty, tranquillity. Not to know the interior life of the architectural monument is to refuse it aesthetic quality. Versailles speaks to us through the rigor of its layout, the elegant equilibrium of its proportions, the discreet pomp of its embellishment, the delicate color of the stone. Its pure and measured voice expresses order and clarity and sovereign urbanity in the very countenance of stone. In such a building, man gains stature and solidity by the majesty which resounds in him, rebuking all dissonant emotion like a perfect harmony. And the surroundings – the park, the sky, and even the town – which the palace annexes and aestheticizes speak the same language. The setting is like a bass accompaniment to the clear voice of the monument.

Expression thus establishes a singular world. It is not the unity of a perceivable space, of an addable sum; it is not a unity which can be grasped from the outside, surveyed, and defined. It proceeds from an internal cohesion which is amenable only to the logic of feeling. The unity manifests itself both in what it integrates and in what it excludes. To see what it excludes, let us consider the problems posed by the mingling of genres. When we say that a certain tragic art, like that of Racine, excludes the comic, we mean that the world expressed by the tragedy is a closed world. It is open through the indefinite multiplicity of objects that is able to qualify, but closed – closed inwardly, so to speak, and according to the internal requirements of cohesion – because of what it rejects. And who is the judge of it? How is it possible, except through feeling, to condemn the false notes or to approve the harmony? That is why the problem of the unity of style is unable to receive an objectively and universally valid solution. But, when the work is done, one does know whether there is a unified feeling such as one experiences upon arriving in a coherent world, in a world which is truly a world. And it is notable that, if the internal unity is missing, there is no longer any expressiveness. There are only represented objects, which may be interesting or tedious but which are so diverse that they no longer form a world. This is the case in certain of Hugo's melodramas, or in those novels which 'end well' in order to please the reader. The danger is great, especially for composite works.[7] Moreover, the unity of the expressed world must include as much elasticity as rigor, perhaps because it is not ratified by an explicit logic. That the expression is total does not imply repetition or monotony. The cruel can alternate with the tender, as the tragic sometimes does with the comic, without destroying the unity of expression. Tenderness and buffoonery in Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* form a precious mixture that constitutes a world of smiling liberty where the action delivers love from agony and restores it to innocence. Similarly, the sublime and the vulgar combine to form a world which one can only call Homeric. Just as different modes of behavior of the same man, provided that the behavior is not superficial and mechanical, possess an indefinable resemblance which attests to the reality of the person, so too in the same novel different scenes with different characters can exhibit, beyond their diversity, a subtle resemblance, like objects subject to the same illumination or movements transfigured by the same emotion. Such resemblance is the seal of the creator. It is also perceptible among the movements

of a suite or a sonata. It is a long way from a minuet to a jig, from an adagio to a presto, and yet, in the presence of great works, we feel the unity of an atmosphere for which it would be vain to seek the reason in a thematic structure (as we would for cyclical works). The atmosphere changes and yet remains the same, sustaining a kind of organic development which does not change its essence. If the Ninth Symphony possesses such prestige, it is perhaps because of the admirable movement from a muted atmosphere in the beginning to a joyous sense of triumphant and fraternal freedom at the end – while passing through a frantic and then measured scherzo and a meditative adagio, without which the force of the movement would be broken and the spiritual unity destroyed.

Because expression is as much a principle of integration as of exclusion, we must say further that the expressed world clearly has the volume of a world. Like the Einsteinian universe, it is both finite and unlimited. It has an atmosphere that diffuses itself, not because it is ungraspable, but because it has the positive power of extending itself beyond the particular objects of which it is the quality and of drawing other objects to it in order to disclose itself through them. This atmosphere is like the spilled wine of which the poet speaks, which requires an entire sea in order to manifest its inexhaustible power of coloration.[8] The soft, delicate tranquillity which is expressed by the interiors of Vermeer is not contained between the walls which the painting encloses. It radiates upon an infinity of absent objects and constitutes the visage of a world of which it is the potentiality.[9] Thus the world of the aesthetic object certainly has the essential world-property of being open. But it is in intension rather than in extension, or, as we shall say, in depth. The world of the aesthetic object is not indefinite in the way that space and time are – in a mechanical way which becomes evident whenever one wishes to give it an objective representation. Rather, it is indefinite in the sense of a potentiality which no actualization can exhaust. It is an indefinite possibility of objects which are linked and reconciled by a common quality, as a sound is pregnant with innumerable harmonic overtones. In this respect, the aesthetic object has the dimensions of a world, dimensions which defy measurement not because there is always more to measure but because there is nothing yet to measure. This world is not crowded with objects; it precedes them. It is like a faint light in which they are revealed and in which everything that is perceptible in this light is disclosed – or, if one prefers, like an atmosphere in which all those things that can display themselves are revealed.

Thus the world of the aesthetic object is not yet structured in accordance with space and time but is rather the potentiality of space and time – as it is of objects as well. It cannot possess an objective space and time, since there is objectivity only in relation to objects which serve to order such space and time. Here we are not yet on the level of objects which the work can represent. Nor does the world of the aesthetic object possess a lived space and time. For space and time are lived only by appealing to objective space and time and through individual consciousnesses, and in the expressed world we fall short of represented personages. This is why we must try to catch space and time at their roots, where they are different from what they are in the represented world – a world for which they may lay the foundation. For representation as such flattens out space and above all stops time. Time as represented is time comprehended, and one can comprehend time only by invoking chronology. That is why the novelist often chooses the lazy solution of merely following chronology. At any rate, if the novel is incapable of *expressing* time, tricks designed to make living time appear, such as those which appear in Pouillon's analysis, are in vain. We return in the end to chronology.[10] For objective time to become animated, we must feel it spread through the aesthetic object, the aesthetic object must itself become temporal, and we must take charge of this temporality. We shall explore later in more detail the idea that the aesthetic object is able to be the source of its own time and space. This idea is posed to us now under another aspect, namely, that in expressing a world the aesthetic object already expresses a preobjective space and time *as* this world. And it is certainly

the same idea, since the aesthetic object is capable of expression only in terms of its being. If it expresses space and time, this is because it is capable of spatializing and temporalizing in some way and not simply because it represents space and time objectively defined. Nor is it the case that the aesthetic object locates itself through its matter in the space and time of the ordinary world. Rather, the aesthetic object is the covert source of a space and time of its own.

In fact, the aesthetic object clearly manifests such space and time in its expression. The architectural monument has a grandeur or a loftiness incommensurable with its surface or its height. The symphony or the novel has a rhythm, a force, or a restraint of which an objective measure like the metronome gives only an impoverished image. We should realize that, in seeking to grasp expression, we disclose an unpopulated world, one which is only the promise of a world. The space and time which we find there are not structures of an organized world but qualities of an expressed world which is a prelude to knowledge. We already have this experience in the real world, where the first determinations of space and time – the far and the near, the absent and the present, the repeatable and the irrevocable – appear to us in impatience, dreaming, nostalgia, astonishment, and repulsion. In this way space is animated and hollowed out, and we respond to it through movement or through a plan, the rough draft of a movement. And it is thus that the aesthetic object possesses a spatiality of its own. In the presence of the Winged Victory, we are at first aware of an animated atmosphere of wind and of upward movement, creating a space which is that of taking flight and which has the dimensions of an ethereal world. The space of the garret where the dancer Babilée struggles like an animal caught in a trap (in the ballet staged by Roland Petit, *Le Jeune Homme et la mort*) is a closed and asphyxiating space which only death is able to open up and join to the horizons of the city, to the everyday life illuminated by the Eiffel Tower. Similarly, in Mallarmé's work, the feeling of emptiness which is communicated to us by the mysterious and chilling aspect of the verse hollows out space as the locus of a perpetual absence, and this emptiness precedes the being through which it speaks.

But it is above all time, in its preobjective form, which the aesthetic object manifests in its expression. There is (and we shall return to this point) a duration peculiar to the musical object. This duration is always movement, a movement which includes the movement of a soul fascinated by sound and immersed in a certain atmosphere. Objective time is still only an external means for the object to manifest this internal temporality of a world without objects or referents, and yet a world which is recognizable and imperiously offered. The titles of the movements or the indications of the tempo exhibit both the quality of the duration for the listener and the cadence of the rhythm for the performer – in short, the means of using the objective time which is like the prime matter of the work. In the literary work, there is likewise a temporality of the atmosphere that emanates from the peculiar style of the narrative and is independent of historical time. The rhythm of *Macbeth* is precipitate, whereas the action is spread out over years – twenty years, according to the chronicles on which the play is based. The rhythm of Joyce's *Ulysses* is extremely slow, whereas the action unfolds in twenty-four hours. Thus the atmosphere, depending on whether it is tragic or liberated, light or heavy, cheerful or suffocating, suggests a duration which shrinks or slackens, drags or quickens. Undoubtedly, if the expressed belongs inevitably to the represented, one could say that the duration is a function of the way in which the represented characters live time. Because Macbeth is fascinated, then corrupted, by crime, his will hurls him toward his own destruction; the fall of a soul into the snare of fatality is thus a movement uniformly accelerated. It is Macbeth's time – that of the evil project which he forms and of which he is captive, caught in its trap like the consciousness of a dreamer – which guides the theatrical time. Similarly, it is Bloom's time which guides the rhythm of the novel, a way of living without the future in an inconsistent universe whose only truth lies in a past which is more legendary than historical and which one recounts instead of repeating. But, conversely, one can say that there is a temporality of

the tragic or of the aesthetic, that is, a temporality of the atmosphere which governs represented space and time and prepares us to grasp the space and time lived by the characters and even a sense of objective space and time. In truth, if there is a time peculiar to the work, it is not easily distinguishable from the time represented in the work. And yet the distinction is necessary, since represented time is a time which is said or shown but is not lived. At the limit, represented time is a time without temporalization, an arrested time such as we find in a painting representing dawn or twilight, or in Leconte de Lisle's poem, 'Midi, roi des étés.' It is time as an object, a time which is no longer time. Expressed time, in contrast, is a genuine time, since it is truly lived and grasped by the spectator capable of associating himself with the aesthetic object. It is in the spectator that the atmosphere temporalizes itself, that the quality of the world awakens the promise of time. In fact, the spectator experiences this temporality only because he also participates in the historical time which the characters live. Conversely, the spectator participates in historical time only because he is taken up in the atmosphere and is sensitive to its own duration.

(c) The represented world and the expressed world

The fact that it is difficult to distinguish between these two types of time, the nascent temporality in the expressed world and the time of the represented object, alerts us to the close relationship established between the expressed and the represented. We have said both that the expressed is like the effect of the represented and that the expressed precedes and heralds the represented. Both propositions are true. The relation of the expressed and the represented can be compared with that of the a priori and the a posteriori. The expressed is, as it were, the possibility of the represented, and the represented is the reality of the expressed. Together with the style which gives them body, they compose the world of the aesthetic object. We shall confirm this when we examine the structure of the aesthetic object since in it the signification is immanent in the sign. Meanwhile, we shall concentrate on the element of signification in order to specify the relationship between the represented and the expressed.

The verb 'to express' requires a subject, and in the present case the subject is the work. It is the *work* which expresses. Yet the work is first of all that which it represents. For this reason, the unity of the expression also depends on the represented objects – which tells us as well that the reflection attached to those objects will be an indispensable moment of aesthetic experience. In arts that are wholly representational in character, represented objects have a primary place, and it appears that they bear the expression in themselves and in such a way that we can read it directly. There is a world of *Hamlet* on the condition that the drama recount a story in which the characters meet, and events link up, in a certain setting. All the features furnished by the creator are here the witnesses and guardians of the expressed world, for example, the cock and donkey of Chagall, the dishonest soubrettes of Molière, the elongated bodies of El Greco. In the case of the writer, it is a matter of his key words, the system of images peculiar to him, and the arsenal of his adjectives (though he is not always so poverty-stricken in this regard as claims the professor in Giraudoux's *Juliette au pays des hommes*). With his treasure of words, the writer strives not so much to describe or mimic a pre-existing world as to evoke a world re-created by him.[11] All that is represented or suggested in this fashion signifies beyond the explicit meaning, as a word does in terms of its intonation. But it signifies still more radically, because the affective coefficient with which the magic of style endows the representation not only tends to emphasize the meaning but also to free it. The represented object becomes a symbol, but a symbol that is not swallowed up in an external signification (as happens in allegory), since this object does not pretend to translate a concept whose comprehension would render it useless. The represented object is not a springboard which one abandons at the moment of leaping from the sensuous to the intelligible. The expressed world

is not another world but the expansion of represented objects to the dimensions of a world. When Valéry sings of the palm, a world opens to us where everything is palmlike – softly curved and fecund, patient, and rich with the grace of gesture and fulfillment.[12] But in the nonrepresentational arts, the work is expressive through the form of the sensuous, and the reading of expression cannot traverse the level of representation. This conclusion brings us to the second, and essential, form of the relationship between the expressed and the represented.

For the represented world has, conversely, need of the expressed world. More specifically, represented objects constitute a world only on the condition that the expression present a unity in multiplicity, somewhat like Claude Bernard's notion of a controlling idea which presides over the constitution of an organism. This primacy of the expressed is explicable in two propositions. First, it gives rise to represented objects. We have said that the atmosphere was produced by the objects, and we must now add that the objects are produced by the atmosphere. The paradox of this dialectical relationship tends to be blunted if one restricts oneself to the example of a nonrepresentational art like music, for then only one of the terms is entirely true. Musical expression does not result from represented objects. On the contrary, musical expression tends to arouse representations in the form of images which are often undesirable and which are a way for the atmosphere to crystallize into a world. This happens needlessly, because the work does not require it and the expressed world should suffice by itself. We even risk losing sight of the multitude of imaginary objects. But we must add that imagination is not responsible for this temptation – to which, however, it easily succumbs. Expression naturally solicits representation as a complement, yet expression is able to do without representation. This solicitation is authorized, on the contrary, in representational arts, where, paradoxically, the atmosphere seems to give rise to the represented world. Is this not what Malraux wishes to say in terms of the psychology of creation when he writes, in reference to Faulkner's *Sanctuary*, 'I would be not at all surprised if … the work were for him, not a story of which the unfolding determines tragic situations, but, on the contrary, a story born of tragedy, of the opposition and the crushing of unknown persons, and if the imagination serves only to lead logically from the characters to this original situation'?[13] Aesthetic experience confirms this observation. It is often through a certain atmosphere into which we are initially thrown that we apprehend the represented object. In the theater, for example, the first scenes directly instill in us a certain emotion which orients our entire comprehension. It is not sufficient that a problem be posed or an intrigue outlined, for it is also necessary that there be communicated to us a certain world-quality within which the problem or intrigue takes on meaning.

In other words, the expressed has primacy in a second sense. It transfigures the represented and confers on it a meaning through which it becomes inexhaustible – an inexhaustibility differing from that which it enjoys within reality. One may believe that this transformation occurs through the object's becoming unreal by being transported into the work, as if one were transplanting it, like a living species. To be sure, this conversion from the real to the unreal is important. We have already ascertained its effects in speaking of the innocuous character of the represented object. We may add here that the techniques peculiar to each art, the material conditions of the representation, are able to alter the shape of the object and even its affective character. One knows, for example, how in film a quite insignificant object is able to move us – a tear becomes unbearable, simply because its presence on the screen is unexpected and insistent. But in the present case, it is a matter of a metamorphosis which does not derive from material conditions but from the fact that the represented object is integrated into a new world. Heidegger says that 'Being is unable to manifest itself in any fashion if it is unable to find some way of entering into a world.'[14] It is through the transcendence of Dasein that this *Urgeschichte* is realized. One can say that the same unexpected event happens to the represented object, imparting to the aesthetic object something like the transcendence of Dasein. To express is to transcend toward a meaning, and the luminescence of

the meaning – the quality of the atmosphere – gives rise to a new countenance for the object. What strange fragrance the fleurs-de-lis of medieval Annunciations take on in illuminating an immediately present world of purity and faith! And when it is Rimbaud who evokes illuminated manuscripts in the secret and amazing world which is peculiar to them, with what color they adorn themselves! Even the cinema in this way can convert the objects which it represents, and not only by exiling them on the screen. One thinks of the furnishings of a room in Rune Hagberg's astonishing film, *Après le crépuscule vient la nuit*. And we must go even farther. Not only does expression confer on what is represented that 'aura,' in Focillon's term, by which it becomes expressive (it is understood that the relation is dialectical, and that at the same time it is because what is represented is expressive that there is an expression). Furthermore, expression consecrates that which is objective in what is represented, that in it which imitates the real. It is because we are sensitive to that which the palm in Valéry's poem expresses, to that surplus of meaning with which it is charged, that we go straight to its vegetable existence, perceive its fullness, glimpse its solemn and peaceful curve, and make it truly a palm for us. When Rimbaud writes, 'O seasons, O castles!' in order to express the world of the helpless and miserable soul in a universe too full and too beautiful – to which the soul can become equal only in an act of denial – then seasons and castles are there in all their glory.[15] It is in like manner that the space and time of the novel or of theater can become veridical. They are objective at the level of the represented, but we have observed that the novelist can experiment with this objectivity without obscuring or annulling it (and thereby depriving space and time of their most pregnant meaning). For space and time form the matrix of the world insofar as the world is external to us and resists us. The novelist experiments in order to animate space and time, allowing us to seize again, on the level of expression, the movement through which they originally reveal the subject. The temporality or spatiality which the aesthetic object expresses, both by its structure and through the contrivances of representation, and with which the spectator is invited to associate himself, establish rather than destroy the objectivity of represented space and time and thus bring about the intelligibility of the narrative. Similarly, an adjective can found a substantive, creating an object by means of the expression which the adjective confers on the substantive – unless the substantive, poetically employed, contains its own adjective in the way that a sound vibrates with its harmonic overtones. The expressed thus confirms the represented in its objective being. The expressed founds the represented while at the same time being founded on it.

In short, the expressed world is like the soul of the represented world, which is, as it were, its body. The relationship which unites them renders them inseparable, and it is together that they constitute the world of the aesthetic object – a world through which this object gains depth. And it is due to their conjugal status that we are able to define the world of a work or of a creator in terms of what it contains. We can say that the world of Balzac is defined by a given social group in which a certain character circulates, or that the world of Cézanne is Provence, an osseous and ardent land, a land of persons who have the motionless opacity of that land. But then we must not forget that there is still another factor – that these landscapes, natural or human, express a certain vision of the world, composing an atmosphere to which a nonrepresentational art like music gives us direct access. In short, the world of the work is a finite but unlimited totality, a totality which the work shows through both its form and its content, while soliciting reflection as well as feeling. This world is the work itself, considered not in its immediate and meaningless reality as a mute thing without a soul but as a thing which surpasses itself toward its meaning – that is, as a quasi subject.

(d) The objective world and the world of the aesthetic object

One question still remains in abeyance, whether it is legitimate to use the term 'world' in order to designate that which the aesthetic object signifies, in particular the surplus of meaning by which

the expressed overflows the represented. We have not inquired into the extent to which the world of the aesthetic object testifies to the objective world. We shall have to confront the problem later, when we inquire about the truth of the aesthetic object. But now we must justify the use we have already made of the notion of world. One objection is likely to be raised immediately – is this notion not applicable exclusively to the real? Is there not in the end a single world, the one in which representations and significations are given? Is not a world which is a function of signs a myth? For the understanding, the only world is the objective world. And reason, even if it is responsible for the *idea* of the world – the 'cosmological idea' – only carries understanding to its limit. Furthermore, an existential conception of the world which subjectifies it in linking it to the work of art, and through the latter to a concrete subject, would be nonsense. Must we accept this objection? That the world of the work is not a real world, in the sense that the objects among which I live are real, is evident. But for all that, does it deserve the title of world?

First of all, we may observe with Jaspers that the notion of an objective and total world is unspecifiable. As soon as I analyze it, I discover that it returns me to my own world, the world where I am and that I am – a world which is for me at one and the same time a correlate and a destiny. The earth is both the planet that revolves around the sun according to astronomy and the earth which sustains me ('precious firmness, o feeling of the earth!') and which, as Husserl says, 'does not, qua *Urarché*, move.' Thus 'if I speak of "the world," I immediately allude to two worlds which remain in spite of all distinctions.'[16] It is notable that science itself meets with this ambiguity (and has on occasion pointed it out to philosophers) when it finds itself obliged to renounce the idea of an objective world which is unique and universal. Indeed, biologists, and even sociologists who follow suit, orient their investigations towards the world as environment, as that which constitutes living beings, but also as that which is constituted by them through an irreducible reciprocal causality. It is here that we encounter the notion of a world which we can call 'subjective' in order to oppose it to an impersonal objective world which could be known only by a disembodied reason and which natural science strives to elaborate. But it is necessary to recall that, for the individual who lives it, his world is by no means subjective. It is real, pressing, and irreducible. For this reason, when reflection discovers such a world, it can no longer accord a monopoly to the objective world, the world that physics, or rather the metaphysics of nature in Kant's sense, knows. This 'subjective' world is neither the true world with respect to which other worlds would be only illusory nor the total world of which the others would be mere parts. On the contrary, it derives its value from the fact that it is deeply rooted in the human experience of the world which is the common world of coexistence. The world of the subject is not a subjectified world but a world in which and on which the subject harmonizes with other subjects. Such a subject is not an inalienable subjectivity but an existence 'given to itself.'[17] Thus this world appeals to an objective treatment which makes it appear as common to all subjects and thereby rejects the claims of the solipsistic *cogito* – in short, it appeals to science. But not even science challenges the initial experience of the subjective world. On the one hand, to the degree that science gets rid of its prejudice of scientism, it takes the subjective world seriously. Ought not the biologist who studies the spider's world in relation to its behavior have a feeling for its world through a kind of sympathy with the spider? In any case, such sympathy is quite evident when the question is, for the psychiatrist, that of grasping the perceptual field of a patient, as in Gelb's analysis of Schneider, or, for the sociologist, that of grasping the cultural field of the primitive.[18] On the other hand, it is possible that the reflection which is associated with a properly objective world is experienced only on the condition of first feeling it. Of course, reflection is conscious of feeling only to reject it, and the objections of Valéry and Pascal to this strategy of reflection pertain. But perhaps it was first necessary to contemplate the sky and be frightened by the silence of infinite spaces in order to conceive subsequently the astronomical world.[19] Similarly, it may be necessary first to feel chemical bodies, even at the

price of the deviations with which imagination exploits this feeling, in order later to constitute a positive chemistry.[20] And when the theory of relativity teaches us that, by virtue of the mechanical equivalence of rest and uniform rectilinear transformation as stated by the principle of identity, all observation is dependent on the observer, such a theory appears to give a scientific transposition of the idea that all apprehension of a world is linked to a feeling of the world.

The objective world thus has no other prerogative than that of being the limit toward which each subjective world tends when the latter ceases being lived in order to be thought. It is an unspecifiable limit, because thought is always the thought of someone and is brought forth from an initial experience.[21] It is in the subjective world, then, that we must seek the root of the notion of the world and the fundamental relation of the world to a subjectivity – a subjectivity which is not a pure transcendental subjectivity, but precisely a subjectivity that defines itself by its relation to a world through the style of its being in the world. And it is thus that the idea of a world peculiar to the aesthetic object is justified as the expression of a creative subjectivity.

In fact, if we now stop short of the distinction between the subjective and the objective, what does the idea of the world signify? Kant tells us that it is an idea of reason which presupposes the establishment by understanding of an order among phenomena. For reason 'applies itself to understanding … being the faculty which secures the unity of the rules of understanding under principles.'[22] So close is the relation with understanding that Kant, after having said that 'the pure concepts of reason … which are *transcendental ideas* … are imposed by the very nature of reason itself,'[23] adds that 'pure and transcendental concepts can issue only from the understanding; reason does not really generate any concept; the most it can do is to *free* a concept of *understanding* from the unavoidable limitations of possible experience,'[24] so that the transcendental ideas are 'simply categories extended to the unconditioned.'[25] Thus the idea of the world is strictly unconditioned: 'What reason is really seeking … is solely the unconditioned.'[26] The idea of the totality of phenomena is only an application and an illustration of the idea of a primordial unity. It is because 'this *unconditioned* is always contained in the *absolute totality of the series* as represented in imagination' that 'reason here adopts the method of starting from the idea of totality, though what it really has in view is the *unconditioned*.'[27] Thus the unconditioned is not the last member of a series, the final and inaccessible object of representation. Rather, it is the soul of the series, that by which the series is a series. The principle 'to which all experience is subordinate, but which is never itself an object of experience,'[28] cannot be determined by a logical derivation analogous to that which allows the categories of understanding to be derived from judgments. Can we not say, then, that although the unconditioned is inaccessible to understanding, it nevertheless reveals itself to feeling – that the idea of the world is in the first place a feeling of the world (just as the moral law, a practical expression of reason, is grasped first through respect)? Furthermore, can we not say that the unconditioned proceeds from the very being of subjectivity? If the world is not the indefinite totality of phenomena but rather their unity (a unity which is like the quality that generates the series), and if the unconditioned is above all a mode of openness, is this not because subjectivity is itself an openness and, as Heidegger would say, transcendental?

As a matter of fact, on this precise point, which alone concerns us here, Heidegger carries on from Kant. He distinguishes, with Kant, two meanings of the term 'world,' one properly cosmological and attached to traditional metaphysics, and the other existential and found not only in the *Anthropology* but also in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. For the world, as the totality of phenomena, is an unconditioned that is still relative to a finite consciousness, and Kant distinguishes it from the transcendental ideal, which is the totality of all things as the object of the *intuitus originarius*.[29] He alludes at the same time to the finitude of consciousness and to the being of man, whose fundamental structure is finitude. Heidegger's interpretation consists in adding to this allusion the analysis of the *Anthropology*, where, as Kant says, 'the concept of the world designates the concept that involves what

necessarily interests each man.'[30] In the last analysis, 'the world designates Dasein in the ground of its being.'[31] But we cannot call the world, even when it is defined as correlative to the transcendence of the subject, 'subjective.' Heidegger takes care to stress this: the subject is not subjective. Nor is that which corresponds to it, since it is defined precisely by the movement of transcendence: 'The world does not become a being within the sphere of the subjective.'[32] By producing the world 'before itself,' the subject discovers himself as belonging to a world. Thus the possibility arises of an objective treatment of the world as a world where I am (and not as a world that I am) – a treatment which will denounce the world as subjective from the outset and will consider the subject as merely one being among others, thereby neglecting the subject's power to transcend. The tension between the subjective world and the objective world has its source in the original experience of the world, which still falls short of the distinction between the objective and the subjective. In any case, the fact that the subject finds himself bound to the world, although suggesting an objective conception of the world as the locus or the totality of phenomena independent of subjectivity, does not disqualify the subjective world for the benefit of the objective world which rational thought strives to elaborate. It is thus that the aesthetic object can appear both as being in the world and as opening up a world.

But with what right do we invoke the aesthetic object here? Is it a subjectivity, a Dasein? Undoubtedly, the interpretation of the subjectivity of the subject which Heidegger proposes seeks above all to 'make possible the problem of Being.' Viewing the being of subjectivity as transcendence, Heidegger is led to propose that transcendence is itself an adventure of being.[33] But it remains that phenomenology is also able to lead to an existential psychoanalysis, on the condition that one accept the transition from the transcendental to the empirical, from the ontological to the anthropological.[34] The fundamental project which constitutes the subject as transcendence and discloses the world can be made determinate in singular projects, each of which discloses a peculiar world. In this case, the world is the singular world of a subject who loses nothing of his quality as subject when his project is the concrete project of a singular being in the world. We can thus speak of the world of a subject. But what of a world of the aesthetic object? We may speak of this too – if the aesthetic object is a quasi subject, that is, if it is capable of expression. In order to express, the aesthetic object must transcend itself toward a signification which is not the explicit signification attached to representations but a more fundamental signification that projects a world. In aesthetic experience, the unconditioned is the atmosphere of a world which is revealed by the expression through which the transcendence of the subject manifests itself. Moreover, we are justified in treating the aesthetic object as a quasi subject, because it is the work of a creator. A subject always appears in the aesthetic object, and that is why one is able to speak indifferently of a world of the creator or of a world of the work. The aesthetic object contains the subjectivity of the subject who has created it and expresses himself in it, and whom in turn it manifests.

Furthermore, the immanence of the creator in the aesthetic object guarantees the reality of the world of this object. For we are now facing a final problem whose answer we can only begin to sketch: is this world real? The question is in fact ambiguous but nevertheless cannot be evaded. For the question poses itself with persistence, whether it be when one opposes the singular world to an objective and total world, or whether it be when one considers that what the aesthetic object says or suggests is unreal or make-believe (because that which is represented only imitates the real, with more or less success, but is not itself real). Thus two implicit affirmations come together to disqualify the truth of the aesthetic object, that of the primacy of the objective world and that of the vanity of art, all of whose resources and ambition should go into imitating the world. The first affirmation leads to the view that the world of the aesthetic object is unreal, since it constitutes a personal interpretation of a world which is in itself impersonal. Reality is measured in terms of objectivity, so that night, for example, is real as an astronomical phenomenon but not real as gloom, as horror, or as that great peace of which Péguy speaks. To this view, we have replied that, even if the world does indeed

authorize that quest for objectivity which entails that subjectivity deny itself – or at least make itself, as Jaspers says, exact – the notion of the world nonetheless has its root in the singular disclosure which is effected by subjectivity. The real then becomes what this subjectivity makes real, and the horror or the serenity of the night is as real as the astronomical fact of night. And the objective world cannot be invoked as embracing or explaining the subjective worlds – any more than optics explains vision when it substitutes a mechanical schema for vision, or than the world of the doctor comprehends the world of the sick, or than the world of the economist reconciles the worlds of management and proletariat. Nor can the world of the aesthetician reduce or replace the world of each creator. Moreover, the world of the aesthetic object is not unreal just because it is make-believe. Certainly, the represented object is unreal. Even for those who believe in hell, the demons of Bosch are unreal. The most exact portrait is unreal, since it does not proffer the subject himself. But the represented is not the essential element. The represented is only a means of saying something. And that which is said is real as soon as the objective world is no longer regarded as the absolute norm of the real. Even if demons are unreal, the world of Bosch is real – as the world of Mozart is real, even though nothing is represented in it. And if one is persistent, one can find a basis for the reality of these worlds in the objective world, since the aesthetic object is after all installed there. The creator has lived in the objective world. Yet it is the subjective worlds which finally *speak* and express a world that is as real as any other. The problem which remains is that of knowing to what extent this world is true and whether, in order to be true, it must be compared with the objective world. We shall approach this problem later.

It suffices for us to have shown that the aesthetic object is, like subjectivity itself, the source of a peculiar world that cannot be reduced to the objective world. We suspect that this world cannot reveal itself except to a subject who would be not only the witness of its epiphany but also capable of associating himself with the movement of the subjectivity which produced it – in brief, a subject who, instead of making himself a consciousness in general so as to think the objective world, responds to the subjectivity of the work through his own subjectivity. We have pointed to the form which aesthetic perception takes in this case – feeling, the specific mode of apprehending the expressed world. The study of aesthetic perception will attempt to establish this thesis in greater detail. But meanwhile, we must return to the being of the aesthetic object, which is in the world and contains its own world.

Translated by Edward S. Casey et al.

Notes

1 Is this still true when one compares Van Gogh's *The Potato Eaters* or his first landscapes, inspired by Corot, with the Arlesian canvases? Does it hold when one considers Rimbaud's first poems (which imitate Banville) alongside *Illuminations*? Certain creators are like Proteus. There are two remarks which must be made in this connection. First, when it is a question of the phenomenal creator, the one of whom the work speaks to us, and not of the actual creator, it is not, strictly speaking, the world of the creator to which one refers but the world of the aesthetic object. It is not the world of Racine but the world of the author of *Phèdre*. And if we do speak of a world of Racine, it is after the fact, when we have discovered an essential kinship between the world of the author of *Phèdre* and that of *Athalie*. Besides, it is noteworthy that modern culture strives to establish that relationship, in offering the complete works of an author or in collecting the chief works of a musician on recordings or of a painter in a museum. Then the style of the creator appears. The effect of the aggregate thus produced is incomparable. Each work is understood alongside the others, without losing its uniqueness. All of them fade away as if each were a voice in a single choir, a province of the same world. This is why we are able to speak of a world of the creator, but always on condition that we do not forget that the creator is revealed only through his works, and that his world is the one expressed in his works.

2 We shall limit ourselves to the representational arts. Whether there are truly nonrepresentational arts can be determined only by studying the nature and function of the subject in the structure of the aesthetic object.

3 How that is possible we are not able to discuss here. The imagination plays a role in it, perhaps not only in Sartre's sense but also in Kant's. The world as an idea of reason would have its root in the imagination as the unlimited power of disclosure. But the imagination opens up, whereas reason demands the possibility of closure, of achieving synthesis. Imagination poses an entirely valid standard, although one which is always on the horizon of knowing or acting.

4 Jean Pouillon points this out in *Temps et roman*, Paris: Gallimard, 1946, p. 186.

5 We shall see, however, that it is able to signify by itself and thus to be more directly associated with the aesthetic object.

6 This is the way that Gordon Craig conceives of the scenery:

> It is idle to talk about the distraction of scenery, because the question here is not how to create some distracting scenery, but rather how to create a place which harmonizes with the thoughts of the poet … Take *Macbeth* … I see two things. I see a lofty and steep rock, and I see the moist cloud which envelops the head of this rock. That is to say, a place for fierce and warlike men to inhabit, a place for phantoms to nest in. Ultimately this moisture will destroy the rock; ultimately these spirits will destroy the men.
>
> (Edward Gordon Craig, *On the Art of the Theatre*, New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1956, p. 22)

7 See Benedetto Croce, *The Essence of Aesthetic*, trans. Douglas Ainslie, London: Heinemann, 1921, pp. 36–37.

8 Dufrenne is thinking of the poem 'Le Vin perdu' by Paul Valéry. – Tr.

9 And that is why we are able to recognize it elsewhere, when we come back to the real, in the peacefulness of a landscape, in the serenity of a countenance, or wherever else. If it is possible that in a sense the aesthetic is the truth of the real, we shall see that it is because of this potentiality.

10 This is perhaps what distinguishes a novel like Aldous Huxley's *Eyeless in Gaza* from a novel like Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*. In the latter, we feel a certain quality of time whereby we are taken into an atmosphere of the unchanging, to the extent that the story communicates the lightness of childhood, the heaviness of memories, and the sclerosis of aging. [See Pouillon, *Temps et roman*. – Tr.]

11 For 'there are no adjectives in nature,' as Claude Roy remarks in his *Descriptions critiques* (Paris, Gallimard, 1949), a book which he dedicates to Colette.

12 Dufrenne refers to Paul Valéry's poem, 'Palme.' – Tr.

13 See André Malraux, *La Psychologie de l'art*, Geneva: Skira, 1947. – Tr.

14 See Martin Heidegger, 'What is Metaphysics?,' trans. R.F.C. Hull and Alan Crick in *Existence and Being*, ed. W. Brock, Chicago: Regnery, 1950. – Tr.

15 Arthur Rimbaud, 'A Season in Hell,' *Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters*, trans. Wallace Fowlie, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, p. 201.

16 Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy*, trans. E.B. Ashton, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969, I, pp. 58f. Jaspers returns here to Heidegger's *Being and Time*, 'which has said the essential on the question'; and we shall ourselves call upon Heidegger in a moment.

17 One finds this expression in the work of both Jaspers and Merleau-Ponty.

18 See E. Gelb and K. Goldstein, *Psychologische Analysen hirnpathologischer Fälle*, Leipzig: Barth, 1920. – Tr.

19 'The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me' (Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1958, no. 206). – Tr.

20 Bachelard has demonstrated this clearly in *La Formation de l'esprit scientifique*, 4th ed., Paris: Vrin, 1938.

21 Conversely, the fact that the subjective world (at least in terms of human intersubjectivity) tends toward that limit prevents us from thinking that there is a numberable multiplicity of such worlds, and, for example, as many worlds as there are particular consciousness. For to suppose a countable plurality would be to suppose a totality, and, consequently, to come back to the idea that the subjective worlds are set apart from an objective world given or conceived previously.

22 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1929, B 359, p. 303.
23 Ibid., A 327, B 384, pp. 318–19.
24 Ibid., A 409, B 435, p. 386.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., A 416, B 444, p. 391.
27 Ibid., A 417, B 445, p. 391.
28 Ibid., A 311, B 367, pp. 308–09.
29 Dufrenne here refers to Kant's distinction between a derivative (*intuitus derivativus*) and an original intuition, which, as Kant says, 'seems to belong solely to the primordial being.' See *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 72, p. 90. – Tr.
30 Cited by Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. James S. Churchill, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962.
31 By slipping from the cosmological to the existential, Heidegger rejoins the general interpretation which he gives of Kant in returning the transcendental to transcendence, and he illuminates the world by the notion of being-in-the-world. A world appears, a being 'enters a world,' because Dasein transcends toward it in a movement which constitutes it. It is clearly toward the world and not toward such and such a being that it transcends, for it is from the totality that Dasein is able to enter into relation with such and such a being. (Provided that one understands the world not as an ontic series but as ontological totality. Heidegger warns us on that matter in *The Essence of Reasons*, trans. Terrence Malick, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1969. The analysis of *Umwelt* in *Being and Time* gives an initial characterization of the phenomenon of the world which only facilitates the transcendental analysis.) Thus Dasein 'finds itself in the midst of being and enters into relation with it' – whereas we shall say that Dasein has the feeling of a world, especially in view of the fact that Heidegger himself refers to the *Befindlichkeit* where that relation is expressed. In other words, 'that human reality transcends amounts to saying: in the essence of its being human reality is the *shaping of a world*' (*Essence of Reasons*, pp. 109f.).
32 Ibid.
33 See Martin Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism,' trans. E. Lohner, in *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, ed. W. Barrett and H. B. Aiken, New York: Random House, 1962, III, pp. 270ff.
34 In our own view, this transition is, for ontology, a decisive and inevitable trial. It is necessary to return to the cave.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Mikel Dufrenne in English

The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience (1953), trans. E.S. Casey, A.A. Anderson, W. Domingo, and L. Jacobson, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973.
The Notion of the A Priori (1959), trans. E.S. Casey, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966.
In the Presence of the Sensuous (1967, 1976, 1981), 3 vols., eds and trans. M.S. Roberts and D. Gallagher, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1987.

Further reading

M. Berman, 'Dufrenne and Merleau-Ponty: a comparative meditation on phenomenology', *Analecta Husserliana*, 2009, vol. 103, pp. 145–60.
W. Chojna and I. Kocol, 'Mikel Dufrenne', in S. Davies, K.M. Higgins, R. Hopkins, R. Stecker, and D.E. Cooper (eds), *A Companion to Aesthetics*, 2nd edn, Oxford: Blackwell, 2009, pp. 249–51.
E. Freiberga, 'Phenomenological interpretation of the work of art: R. Ingarden, M. Dufrenne, P. Ricoeur', *Analecta Husserliana*, 2006, vol. 92, pp. 93–102.
R. Magliola, 'Mikel Dufrenne', *Phenomenology and Literature: An Introduction*, West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1977, pp. 142–73.

Chapter 8

GASTON BACHELARD

INTRODUCTION

The career of the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1884–1962) embraces physics, psychoanalysis, and phenomenology. As professor of physics at the Collège de Bar-sur-Aube from 1919 to 1930, he became preoccupied with the philosophical issues raised by scientific knowledge. He began to conduct research in the philosophy of science, and in 1940 he was appointed as chair of the history and philosophy of science at the Sorbonne. Running through Bachelard's various specialisms is an interest in the relationship between thought and matter. In *The New Scientific Spirit* (1934), he argues that theory construction and the data generated by experimentation can shape one another; the concepts adopted can affect the way in which objects are studied, and the material data collected can impinge upon or challenge the expectations embodied in the concepts. Development in science occurs, he suggests, not as a process of accumulation, one theory building upon another, but as a series of jumps or discontinuities, in which one theory transcends another. Bachelard's observation anticipates the concept of the 'paradigm shift', articulated by the American philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962).[1] The intriguing question here is: how does transcendence happen, how do new ideas emerge? In order to explore how ideas connect with one another and how we behave in and around them – what might be called a 'topography of thought' – Bachelard turns to psychoanalysis and phenomenology.

'The Dialectics of Outside and Inside' is a chapter from *The Poetics of Space* (1957). The book is a wonderful display of the phenomenological principle that thought and experience emerge or unfold themselves from their surrounding, defining conditions. Bachelard's theme is the house or, rather, to acknowledge a sense of 'belonging' to the world, the home: the domain in which we spend most of our time and in which we have the most intimate experiences. The chapter assesses the 'inner' and 'outer' metaphors which shape philosophy's conception of thought, and considers what the implications for philosophy might be when these terms are taken in a more lived, architectural sense.

In philosophy, and in our general understanding of language, there is the tradition which thinks of the concept as a circle or an enclosure, circumscribing all the entities to which the term refers, e.g. 'red' refers to all possible red things, 'car' refers to all possible cars. But, on this account, *being*, i.e. what something is or is said to be, is reduced to a disjunction: either you are inside or outside the circle. The model is too geometric and too visual, leading the metaphysician to think that outlines exist in nature, and that everything possible is already open to view. To make an authentic study of being, Bachelard proposes, 'it is preferable to follow all the ontological deviations of the various experiences of beings'. Rather than allowing a simplifying geometry

to restrict our recognition of what can be, Bachelard argues, we should let our sense of the possibilities of experience be 'ontologically amplified' by the diversities of experience. Thus, he explores the intimate senses of insides, outsides, doorways, and passageways in order to articulate a more resonant, textured model of thought.

Bachelard focuses on the poet's experience of the house, for the poet gives us 'exaggerated images', and these benefit phenomenology by working against the 'habits of reduction'. Poetry is exaggerated in the sense that it pursues an experience *to the end*. It is like being in a house and not being satisfied with just seeing one room but wanting to explore them all. This gives poetry its own topographic form: the door. The doorway represents the crossing of thresholds, the passage from one world to another, freedom from the confines of reductive metaphysics. The disclosive properties of metaphor are foregrounded by presenting it as the crossing of a threshold, moving from one concept to another. Here is one answer to Bachelard's question of the origin of new ideas, consistent with the large volume of recent research on the role metaphor plays in creating new meaning.[2] Furthermore, his images of opening up a new realm invite comparison with Heidegger's concept of poetry as *aletheia*, and his interlacing structures of thought with the intimate, physical gestures of home is redolent of the relationships being drawn in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body.

Notes

1 T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

2 On the creation of new meaning by metaphor, see: M. Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962; M. Black, 'More about metaphor', in A. Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 19–43; C. Cazeaux, *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy: From Kant to Derrida*, New York: Routledge, 2007; D. Davidson, 'What metaphors mean', in S. Sacks (ed.), *On Metaphor*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, pp. 29–45; R.W. Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; C.R. Hausman, *Metaphor and Art: Interactionism and Reference in the Verbal and Nonverbal Arts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; Z. Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002; G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*, New York: Basic Books, 1999; and P. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. R. Czerny *et al.*, London: Routledge, 1978.

■ ■ ■

THE DIALECTICS OF OUTSIDE AND INSIDE

GASTON BACHELARD

Les géographies solennelles des limites humaines …

(Paul Eluard, *Les Yeux fertiles*, p. 42)

(The solemn geographies of human limits.)

Car nous sommes où nous ne sommes pas.

(Pierre-Jean Jouve, *Lyrique*, p. 59)

(For we are where we are not.)

Une des maximes d'éducation pratique qui ont régi mon enfance:
'Ne mange pas la bouche ouverte.'

(Colette, *Prisons et paradis*, p. 79)

(One of the maxims of practical education that governed my childhood:
'Don't eat with your mouth open.')

I

Outside and inside form a dialectic of division, the obvious geometry of which blinds us as soon as we bring it into play in metaphorical domains. It has the sharpness of the dialectics of *yes* and *no*, which decides everything. Unless one is careful, it is made into a basis of images that govern all thoughts of positive and negative. Logicians draw circles that overlap or exclude each other, and all their rules immediately become clear. Philosophers, when confronted with outside and inside, think in terms of being and non-being. Thus profound metaphysics is rooted in an implicit geometry which – whether we will or no – confers spatiality upon thought; if a metaphysician could not draw, what would he think? Open and closed, for him, are thoughts. They are metaphors that he attaches to everything, even to his systems. In a lecture given by Jean Hyppolite on the subtle structure of denegation (which is quite different from the simple structure of negation) Hyppolite spoke[1] of 'a first myth of outside and inside.' And he added: 'you feel the full significance of this myth of outside and inside in alienation, which is founded on these two terms. Beyond what is expressed in their formal opposition lie alienation and hostility between the two.' And so, simple geometrical opposition becomes tinged with a[g]gressivity. Formal opposition is incapable of remaining calm. It is obsessed by the myth. But this action of the myth throughout the immense domain of imagination and expression should not be studied by attributing to it the false light of geometrical intuitions.[2]

'This side' and 'beyond' are faint repetitions of the dialectics of inside and outside: everything takes form, even infinity. We seek to determine being and, in so doing, transcend all situations, to give a situation of all situations. Man's being is confronted with the world's being, as though primitivity could be easily arrived at. The dialectics of *here* and *there* has been promoted to the rank of an absolutism according to which these unfortunate adverbs of place are endowed with unsupervised powers of ontological determination. Many metaphysical systems would need mapping. But in philosophy, all short-cuts are costly, and philosophical knowledge cannot advance from schematized experiments.

II

I should like to examine a little more closely, this geometrical cancerization of the linguistic tissue of contemporary philosophy.

For it does indeed seem as though an artificial syntax welded adverbs and verbs together in such a way as to form excrescences. By multiplying hyphens, this syntax obtains words that are sentences in themselves, in which the outside features blend with the inside. Philosophical language is becoming a language of agglutination.

Sometimes, on the contrary, instead of becoming welded together, words loosen their intimate ties. Prefixes and suffixes – especially prefixes – become unwelded: they want to think for themselves. Because of this, words are occasionally thrown out of balance. Where is the main stress, for instance, in *being-there* (être-là): on *being*, or on *there*? In *there* – which it would be better to call *here* – shall I first look for my being? Or am I going to find, in my being, above all, certainty of my fixation in a *there*? In any case, one of these terms always weakens the

other. Often the *there* is spoken so forcefully that the ontological aspects of the problems under consideration are sharply summarized in a geometrical fixation. The result is dogmatization of philosophemes as soon as they are expressed. In the tonal quality of the French language, the *là* (there) is so forceful, that to designate being (*l'être*) by *être-là* is to point an energetic forefinger that might easily relegate intimate being to an exteriorized place.

But why be in such a hurry to make these first designations? One has the impression that metaphysicians have stopped taking time to think. To make a study of being, in my opinion, it is preferable to follow all the ontological deviations of the various experiences of being. For, in reality, the experiences of being that might justify 'geometrical' expression are among the most indigent … In French, one should think twice before speaking of *l'être-là*. Entrapped in being, we shall always have to come out of it. And when we are hardly outside of being, we always have to go back into it. Thus, in being, everything is circuitous, roundabout, recurrent, so much talk; a chaplet of sojournings, a refrain with endless verses.

But what a spiral man's being represents![3] And what a number of invertible dynamisms there are in this spiral! One no longer knows *right away* whether one is running toward the center or escaping. Poets are well acquainted with the existence of this hesitation of being, as exemplified in this poem by Jean Tardieu:

Pour avancer je tourne sur moi-même
Cyclone par l'immobile habité.

(Jean Tardieu, *Les Témoins invisibles*, p. 36)

(In order to advance, I walk the treadmill of myself
Cyclone inhabited by immobility.)

Mais au-dedans, plus de frontières!

(But within, no more boundaries!)

Thus, the spiraled being who, from outside, appears to be a well-invested center, will never reach his center. The being of man is an unsettled being which all expression unsettles. In the reign of the imagination, an expression is hardly *proposed*, before being needs another expression, before it must be the being of another expression.

In my opinion, verbal conglomerates should be avoided. There is no advantage to metaphysics for its thinking to be cast in the molds of linguistic fossils. On the contrary, it should benefit by the extreme mobility of modern languages and, at the same time, remain in the homogeneity of a mother tongue; which is what real poets have always done.

To benefit by all the lessons of modern psychology and all that has been learned about man's being through psychoanalysis, metaphysics should therefore be resolutely discursive. It should beware of the privileges of evidence that are the property of geometrical intuition. Sight says too many things at one time. Being does not see itself. Perhaps it listens to itself. It does not stand out, it is not *bordered* by nothingness: one is never sure of finding it, or of finding it solid, when one approaches a center of being. And if we want to determine man's being, we are never sure of being closer to ourselves if we 'withdraw' into ourselves, if we move toward the center of the spiral; for often it is in the heart of being that being is errancy. Sometimes, it is in being outside itself that being tests consistencies. Sometimes, too, it is closed in, as it were, on the outside. Later, I shall give a poetic text in which the prison is on the outside.

If we multiplied images, taking them in the domains of lights and sounds, of heat and cold, we should prepare a slower ontology, but doubtless one that is more certain than the ontology that reposes upon geometrical images.

I have wanted to make these general remarks because, from the point of view of geometrical expressions, the dialectics of outside and inside is supported by a reinforced geometrism, in which limits are barriers. We must be free as regards all *definitive* intuitions – and geometrism records definitive intuitions – if we are to follow the daring of poets (as we shall do later) who invite us to the finesses of experience of intimacy, to 'escapades' of imagination.

First of all, it must be noted that the two terms 'outside' and 'inside' pose problems of metaphysical anthropology that are not symmetrical. To make inside concrete and outside vast is the first task, the first problem, it would seem, of an anthropology of the imagination. But between concrete and vast, the opposition is not a true one. At the slightest touch, asymmetry appears. And it is always like that: inside and outside do not receive in the same way the qualifying epithets that are the measure of our adherence. Nor can one *live* the qualifying epithets attached to inside and outside in the same way. Everything, even size, is a human value, and we have already shown, in a preceding chapter, that miniature can accumulate size. It is *vast* in its way.

In any case, inside and outside, as experienced by the imagination, can no longer be taken in their simple reciprocity; consequently, by omitting geometrical references when we speak of the first expressions of being, by choosing more concrete, more phenomenologically exact inceptions, we shall come to realize that the dialectics of inside and outside multiply with countless diversified nuances.

Pursuing my usual method, I should like to discuss my thesis on the basis of an example of concrete poetics, for which I shall ask a poet to provide an image that is sufficiently new in its *nuance of being* to furnish a lesson in ontological amplification. Through the newness of the image and through its amplification, we shall be sure to reverberate above, or on the margin of reasonable certainties.

III

In a prose-poem entitled: *L'espace aux ombres* Henri Michaux writes:[4]

> *L'espace, mais vous ne pouvez concevoir, cet horrible en dedans–en dehors qu'est le vrai espace.*
>
> *Certaines (ombres) surtout se bandant une dernière fois, font un effort désespéré pour 'être dans leur seule unité.' Mal leur en prend. J'en rencontrai une.*
>
> *Détruite par châtiment, elle n'était plus qu'un bruit, mais énorme.*
>
> *Un monde immense l'entendait encore, mais elle n'était plus, devenue seulement et uniquement un bruit, qui allait rouler encore des siècles mais destiné à s'éteindre complètement, comme si elle n'avait jamais été.*

Shade-Haunted Space

> (Space, but you cannot even conceive the horrible inside–outside that real space is.
>
> Certain (shades) especially, girding their loins one last time, make a desperate effort to 'exist as a single unity.' But they rue the day. I met one of them.
>
> Destroyed by punishment, it was reduced to a noise, a thunderous noise.
>
> An immense world still heard it, but it no longer existed, having become simply and solely a noise, which was to rumble on for centuries longer, but was fated to die out *completely*, as though it had never existed.)

If we examine closely the lesson in philosophy the poet gives us, we shall find in this passage a spirit that has lost its 'being-there' (être-là), one that has so declined as to fall from *the being of its shade* and mingle with the rumors of being, in the form of meaningless noise, of a confused hum that *cannot be located*. It once was. But wasn't it merely the noise that it has become? Isn't its punishment the fact of having become the mere echo of the meaningless, useless noise it once

was? Wasn't it formerly what it is now: a sonorous echo from the vaults of hell? It is condemned to repeat the word of its evil intention, a word which, being imprinted in being, has overthrown being.[5] And we are in hell, and a part of us is always in hell, walled-up, as we are, in the world of evil intentions. Through what naïve intuition do we locate evil, which is boundless, in a hell? This spirit, this shade, this noise of a shade which, the poet tells us, desires its unity, may be heard on the outside without it being possible to be sure that it is inside. In this 'horrible inside–outside' of unuttered words and unfulfilled intentions, within itself, being is slowly digesting its nothingness. The process of its reduction to nothing will last 'for centuries.' The hum of the being of rumors continues both in time and in space. In vain the spirit gathers its remaining strength. It has become the backwash of expiring being. Being is alternately condensation that disperses with a burst, and dispersion that flows back to a center. Outside and inside are both intimate – they are always ready to be reversed, to exchange their hostility. If there exists a border-line surface between such an inside and outside, this surface is painful on both sides. When we experience this passage by Henri Michaux, we absorb a mixture of being and nothingness. The center of 'being-there' wavers and trembles. Intimate space loses its clarity, while exterior space loses its void, void being the raw material of possibility of being. We are banished from the realm of possibility.

In this drama of intimate geometry, where should one live? The philosopher's advice to withdraw into oneself in order to take one's place in existence, loses its value, and even its significance, when the supplest image of 'being-there' has just been experienced through the ontological nightmare of this poet. Let us observe, however, that this nightmare is not visually frightening. The fear does not come from the outside. Nor is it composed of old memories. It has no past, no physiology. Nothing in common, either, with having one's breath taken away. Here fear is being itself. Where can one flee, where find refuge? In what shelter can one take refuge? Space is nothing but a 'horrible outside–inside.'

And the nightmare is simple, because it is radical. It would be intellectualizing the experience if we were to say that the nightmare is the result of a sudden doubt as to the certainty of inside and the distinctness of outside. What Michaux gives us as an a priori of being is the entire space-time of ambiguous being. In this ambiguous space, the mind has lost its geometrical homeland and the spirit is drifting.

Undoubtedly, we do not have to pass through the narrow gate of such a poem. The philosophies of anguish want principles that are less simplified. They do not turn their attention to the activity of an ephemeral imagination, for the reason that they inscribed anguish in the heart of being long before images had given it reality. Philosophers treat themselves to anguish, and all they see in the images are manifestations of its causality. They are not at all concerned with living the being of the image. Phenomenology of the imagination must assume the task of seizing this ephemeral being. In fact, phenomenology can learn from the very brevity of the image. What strikes us here is that the metaphysical aspect originates on the very level of the image, on the level of an image which disturbs the notions of a spatiality commonly considered to be able to reduce these disturbances and restore the mind to a statute of indifference to space that does not have to localize dramatic events.

Personally, I welcome this poet's image as a little piece of experimental folly, like a virtual grain of hashish without which it is impossible to enter into the reign of the imagination. And how should one receive an exaggerated image, if not by exaggerating it a little more, by personalizing the exaggeration? The phenomenological gain appears right away: in prolonging *exaggeration*, we may have the good fortune to avoid the habits of *reduction*. With space images, we are in a region where reduction is easy, commonplace. There will always be someone who will do away with all complications and oblige us to leave as soon as there is mention of space – whether figurative or not – or of the opposition of outside and inside. But if reduction is easy, exaggeration is all

the more interesting, from the standpoint of phenomenology. This problem is very favorable, it seems to me, for marking the opposition between reflexive reduction and pure imagination. However, the direction of psychoanalytical interpretation – which is more liberal than classical literary criticism – follows the diagram of reduction. Only phenomenology makes it a principle to examine and test the psychological being of an image, before any reduction is undertaken. The dialectics of the dynamisms of reduction and exaggeration can throw light on the dialectics of psychoanalysis and phenomenology. It is, of course, phenomenology which gives us the psychic positivity of the image. Let us therefore transform our amazement into admiration. We can even begin by admiring. Then, later, we shall see whether or not it will be necessary to organize our disappointment through criticism and reduction. To benefit from this active, immediate admiration, one has only to follow the positive impulse of exaggeration. Here I read Michaux's poem over and over, and I accept it as a phobia of inner space, as though hostile remoteness had already become oppressive in the tiny cell represented by inner space. With this poem, Henri Michaux has juxtaposed in us claustrophobia and agoraphobia; he has aggravated the line of demarcation between outside and inside. But in doing so, from the psychological standpoint, he has demolished the lazy certainties of the geometrical intuitions by means of which psychologists sought to govern the space of intimacy. Even figuratively, nothing that concerns intimacy can be shut in, nor is it possible to fit into one another, for purposes of designating depth, impressions that continue to *surge up*. A fine example of phenomenological notation may be seen in the following simple line by a symbolist poet: 'The pansy took on new life when it became a corolla …'[6]

A philosopher of the imagination, therefore, should follow the poet to the ultimate extremity of his images, without ever reducing this extremism, which is the specific phenomenon of the poetic impulse. In a letter to Clara Rilke, Rilke wrote:

> Works of art always spring from those who have faced the danger, gone to the very end of an experience, to the point beyond which no human being can go. The further one dares to go, the more decent, the more personal, the more unique a life becomes.[7]

But is it necessary to go and look for 'danger' other than the danger of writing, of expressing oneself? Doesn't the poet put language in danger? Doesn't he utter words that are dangerous? Hasn't the fact that, for so long, poetry has been the echo of heartache, given it a pure dramatic tonality? When we really live a poetic image, we learn to know, in one of its tiny fibers, a becoming of being that is an awareness of the *being's inner disturbance*. Here being is so sensitive that it is upset by a word. In the same letter, Rilke adds: 'This sort of derangement, which is peculiar to us, must go into our work.'

Exaggeration of images is in fact so *natural* that however original a poet may be, one often finds the same impulse in another poet. Certain images used by Jules Supervielle, for instance, may be compared with the Michaux image we have just been studying. Supervielle also juxtaposes claustrophobia and agoraphobia when he writes: '*Trop d'espace nous étouffe beaucoup plus que s'il n'y en avait pas assez*.' (Too much space smothers us much more than if there were not enough.)[8]

Supervielle is also familiar with 'exterior dizziness' (*Gravitations*, p. 21). And elsewhere he speaks of 'interior immensity.' Thus the two spaces of inside and outside exchange their dizziness.

In another text by Supervielle, which Christian Sénéchal points out in his book on Supervielle, *the prison is outside*. After endless rides on the South American pampas, Supervielle wrote: 'Precisely because of too much riding and too much freedom, and of the unchanging horizon, in spite of our desperate gallopings, the pampa assumed the aspect of a prison for me, a prison that was bigger than the others.'

IV

If, through poetry, we restore to the activity of language its free field of expression, we are obliged to supervise the use of fossilized metaphors. For instance, when open and closed are to play a metaphorical rôle, shall we harden or soften the metaphor? Shall we repeat with the logicians that a door must be open or closed? And shall we find in this maxim an instrument that is really effective for analyzing human passions? In any case, such tools for analysis should be sharpened each time they are used. Each metaphor must be restored to its surface nature; it must be brought up out of habit of expression to actuality of expression. For it is dangerous, in expressing oneself, to be 'all roots.'

The phenomenology of the poetic imagination allows us to explore the being of man considered as the being of a *surface*, of the surface that separates the region of the same from the region of the other. It should not be forgotten that in this zone of sensitized surface, before being, one must speak, if not to others, at least to oneself. And advance always. In this orientation, the universe of speech governs all the phenomena of being, that is, the new phenomena. By means of poetic language, waves of newness flow over the surface of being. And language bears within itself the dialectics of open and closed. Through *meaning* it encloses, while through poetic expression, it opens up.

It would be contrary to the nature of my inquiries to summarize them by means of radical formulas, by defining the being of man, for instance, as the being of an ambiguity. I only know how to work with a philosophy of detail. Then, on the surface of being, in that region where being *wants* to be both visible and hidden, the movements of opening and closing are so numerous, so frequently inverted, and so charged with hesitation, that we could conclude on the following formula: man is half-open being.

V

But how many daydreams we should have to analyze under the simple heading of Doors! For the door is an entire cosmos of the Half-open. In fact, it is one of its primal images, the very origin of a daydream that accumulates desires and temptations: the temptation to open up the ultimate depths of being, and the desire to conquer all reticent beings. The door schematizes two strong possibilities, which sharply classify two types of daydream. At times, it is closed, bolted, padlocked. At others, it is open, that is to say, wide open.

But then come the hours of greater imagining sensibility. On May nights, when so many doors are closed, there is one that is just barely ajar. We have only to give it a very slight push! The hinges have been well oiled. And our fate becomes visible.

And how many doors were doors of hesitation! In *La Romance du retour*, by Jean Pellerin, this tender, delicate poet wrote:[9]

La porte me flaire, elle hésite.

(The door scents me, it hesitates.)

In this verse, so much psychism is transferred to the object that a reader who attaches importance to objectivity will see in it mere brain-play. If such a document had its source in some remote mythology, we should find it more readily acceptable. But why not take the poet's verse as a small element of spontaneous mythology? Why not sense that, incarnated in the door, there is a little threshold god? And there is no need to return to a distant past, a past that is no longer our own, to find sacred properties attributed to the threshold. In the third century, Porphyrus

wrote: 'A threshold is a sacred thing.'[10] But even if erudition did not permit us to refer to such a sacralization, why should we not react to sacralization through poetry, through a poem of our own time, tinged with fantasy, perhaps, but which is in harmony with primal values?

Another poet, with no thought of Zeus, discovered the majesty of the threshold within himself and wrote the following:

Je me surprends à définir le seuil
Comme étant le lieu géométrique
Des arrivées et des départs
Dans la Maison du Père.[11]

(I find myself defining threshold
As being the geometrical place
Of the comings and goings
In my Father's House.)

And what of all the doors of mere curiosity, that have tempted being for nothing, for emptiness, for an unknown that is not even imagined?

Is there one of us who hasn't in his memories a Bluebeard chamber that should not have been opened, even half-way? Or – which is the same thing for a philosophy that believes in the primacy of the imagination – that should not even have been imagined open, or capable of opening half-way?

How concrete everything becomes in the world of the spirit when an object, a mere door, can give images of hesitation, temptation, desire, security, welcome and respect. If one were to give an account of all the doors one has closed and opened, of all the doors one would like to re-open, one would have to tell the story of one's entire life.

But is he who opens a door and he who closes it the same being? The gestures that make us conscious of security or freedom are rooted in a profound depth of being. Indeed, it is because of this 'depth' that they become so normally symbolical. Thus René Char takes as the theme of one of his poems this sentence by Albert the Great: 'In Germany there once lived twins, one of whom opened doors by touching them with his right arm, and the other who closed them by touching them with his left arm.' A legend like this, treated by a poet, is naturally not a mere reference. It helps the poet sensitize the world at hand, and refine the symbols of everyday life. The old legend becomes quite new when the poet makes it his own. He knows that there are two 'beings' in a door, that a door awakens in us a two-way dream, that it is doubly symbolical.

And then, onto what, toward what, do doors open? Do they open for the world of men, or for the world of solitude? Ramon Gomez de la Serna wrote: 'Doors that open on the countryside seem to confer freedom behind the world's back.'[12]

VI

As soon as the word *in* appears in an expression, people are inclined not to take literally the *reality of the expression*, and they translate what they believe to be figurative language into reasonable language. It is not easy for me, indeed it seems futile, to follow, for instance, the poet – I shall furnish documentation on the subject – who says that the house of the past is alive in his own head. I immediately interpret: the poet simply wants to say that an old memory has been preserved *in* his mind. The exaggerated nature of the image that seeks to upset the relationship of contained to container makes us shrink in the presence of what can appear to be mental derangement of images. We should be more indulgent if we were reading a fever chart. By

following the labyrinth of fever that runs through the body, by exploring the 'seats of fever,' or the pains that inhabit a hollow tooth, we should learn that the imagination localizes suffering and creates and recreates imaginary anatomies. But I shall not use in this work the numerous documents that psychiatry provides. I prefer to underline my break with causalism by rejecting all organic causality. For my problem is to discuss the images of a pure, free imagination, a liberating imagination that has no connection with organic incitements.

These documents of absolute poetics exist. The poet does not shrink before reversals of dovetailings. Without even thinking that he is scandalizing reasonable men, contrary to the most ordinary common sense, he actually experiences reversal of dimensions or inversion of the perspective of inside and outside.

The abnormal nature of the image does not mean that it is artificially produced, for the imagination is the most natural of faculties. No doubt the images I plan to examine could not figure in a psychology of projects, even of *imaginary projects*. For every project is a contexture of images and thoughts that supposes a grasp of reality. We need not consider it, consequently, in a doctrine of pure imagination. It is even useless to *continue* an image, or to *maintain* it. All we want is for it to exist.

Let us study then, in all phenomenological simplicity, the documents furnished by poets.

In his book: *Où boivent les loups*, Tristan Tzara writes (p. 24):

Une lente humilité pénètre dans la chambre
Qui habite en moi dans la paume du repos.

(A slow humility penetrates the room
That dwells in me in the palm of repose.)

In order to derive benefit from the oneirism of such an image, one must no doubt first place oneself 'in the palm of repose,' that is, withdraw into oneself, and condense oneself in the being of a repose, which is the asset one has most easily 'at hand.' Then the great stream of simple humility that is in the silent room flows into ourselves. The intimacy of the room becomes our intimacy. And correlatively, intimate space has become so quiet, so simple, that all the quietude of the room is localized and centralized in it. The room is very deeply our room, it is in us. We no longer *see* it. It no longer *limits* us, because we are in the very ultimate depth of its repose, in the repose that it has conferred upon us. And all our former rooms come and fit into this one. How simple everything is!

In another passage, which is even more enigmatic for the reasonable mind, but quite as clear for anyone who senses the topoanalytical inversions of images, Tzara writes:

Le marché du soleil est entré dans la chambre
Et la chambre dans la tête bourdonnante.

(The market of the sun has come into my room
And the room into my buzzing head.)

In order to accept and hear this image, one must experience the strange whir of the sun as it comes into a room in which one is alone, for it is a fact that the first ray *strikes* the wall. These sounds will be heard also – over and beyond the fact – by those who know that every one of the sun's rays carries with it bees. Then everything starts buzzing and one's head is a hive, the hive of the sounds of the sun.

To begin with, Tzara's image was overcharged with surrealism. But if we overcharge it still more, if we increase the charge of image, if we go beyond the barriers set up by criticism, then

we really enter into the surrealistic action of a pure image. And the exaggerated nature of the image is thus proved to be active and communicable, this means that it started well: the sunny room is buzzing *in* the head of the dreamer.

A psychologist will say that all my analysis does is to relate daring, too daring, 'associations.' And a psychoanalyst will agree perhaps to 'analyze' this daring; he is accustomed to doing this. Both of them, if they take the image as symptomatic, will try to find reasons and causes for it. A phenomenologist has a different approach. He takes the image just as it is, just as the poet created it, and tries to make it his own, to feed on this rare fruit. He brings the image to the very limit of what he is able to imagine. However far from being a poet he himself may be, he tries to repeat its creation for himself and, if possible, continue its exaggeration. Here association ceases to be fortuitous, but is sought after, willed. It is a poetic, specifically poetic, constitution. It is sublimation that is entirely rid of the organic or psychic weights from which one wanted to be free. In other words, it corresponds to pure sublimation.

Of course, such an image is not received in the same way every day. Psychically speaking, it is never objective. Other commentaries could renew it. Also, to receive it properly, one should be in the felicitous mood of super-imagination.

Once we have been touched by the grace of super-imagination, we feel it in the presence of the simpler images through which the exterior world deposits virtual elements of highly-colored space in the heart of our being. The image with which Pierre-Jean Jouve *constitutes* his secret being is one of these. He places it in his most intimate cell:

> *La cellule de moi-même emplit d'étonnement*
> *La muraille peinte à la chaux de mon secret.*
>
> (*Les Noces*, p. 50)
>
> (The cell of myself fills with wonder
> The white-washed wall of my secret.)

The room in which the poet pursues such a dream as this is probably not 'whitewashed.' But this room in which he is writing is so quiet, that it really deserves its name, which is, the 'solitary' room! It is inhabited thanks to the image, just as one inhabits an image which is 'in the imagination.' Here the poet inhabits the cellular image. This image does not transpose a reality. It would be ridiculous, in fact, to ask the dreamer its dimensions. It does not lend itself to geometrical intuition, but is a solid framework for secret being. And secret being feels that it is guarded more by the whiteness of the lime-wash than by the strong walls. The cell of the secret is white. A single value suffices to coordinate any number of dreams. And it is always like that, the poetic image is under the domination of a heightened quality. The whiteness of the walls, alone, protects the dreamer's *cell*. It is stronger than all geometry. It is a part of the cell of intimacy.

Such images lack stability. As soon as we depart from expression as it is, as the author gives it, in all spontaneity, we risk relapsing into literal meaning. We also risk being bored by writing that is incapable of condensing the intimacy of the image. And we have to withdraw deep into ourselves, for instance, to read this fragment by Maurice Blanchot in the tonality of being in which it was written:

> About this room, which was plunged in utter darkness, I knew everything, I had entered into it, I bore it within me, I made it live, with a life that is not life, but which is stronger than life, and which no force in the world can vanquish.[13]

One feels in these repetitions, or to be more exact, in this constant strengthening of an image into which one has entered (and not of a room into which one has entered, a room which the author bears within himself, and which he has made live with a life that does not exist in life), one feels, as I said, that it is not the writer's intention merely to describe his *familiar* abode. Memory would *encumber* this image by stocking it with *composite memories* from several periods of time. Here everything is simpler, more radically simple. Blanchot's room is an abode of intimate space, it is his inner room. We share the writer's image, thanks to what we are obliged to call a *general image*, that is, an image which participation keeps us from confusing with a *generality*. We individualize this general image right away. We live in it, we enter into it the way Blanchot enters into his. Neither word nor idea suffices, the writer must help us to reverse space; and shun description, in order to have a more valid experience of the hierarchy of repose.

Often it is from the very fact of concentration in the most restricted intimate space that the dialectics of inside and outside draws its strength. One feels this elasticity in the following passage by Rilke:[14] 'And there is almost no space here; and you feel almost calm at the thought that it is impossible for anything very large to hold in this narrowness.' There is consolation in knowing that one is in an atmosphere of calm, in a narrow space. Rilke achieved this narrowness intimately, in inner space where everything is commensurate with inner being. Then, in the next sentence, the text continues dialectically:

> But outside, everything is immeasurable. And when the level rises outside, it also rises in you, not in the vessels that are partially controlled by you, or in the phlegm of your most unimpressionable organs: but it grows in the capillary veins, drawn upward into the furthermost branches of your infinitely ramified existence. This is where it rises, where it overflows from you, higher than your respiration, and, as a final resort, you take refuge, as though on the tip of your breath. Ah! where, where next? Your heart banishes you from yourself, your heart pursues you, and you are already almost beside yourself, and you can't stand it any longer. Like a beetle that has been stepped on, you flow from yourself, and your lack of hardness or elasticity means nothing any more.
>
> Oh night without objects. Oh window muffled on the outside, oh, doors carefully closed; customs that have come down from times long past, transmitted, verified, never entirely understood. Oh silence in the stair-well, silence in the adjoining rooms, silence up there, on the ceiling. Oh mother, oh one and only you, who faced all this silence, when I was a child.

I have given this long passage without cuts for the reason that it has dynamic continuity. Inside and outside are not abandoned to their geometrical opposition. From what overflow of a ramified interior does the substance of being run, does the outside call? Isn't the exterior an old intimacy lost in the shadow of memory? In what silence does the stairwell resound? In this silence there are soft foot-steps: the mother comes back to watch over her child, as she once did. She restores to all these confused, unreal sounds their concrete, familiar meaning. Limitless night ceases to be empty space. This passage by Rilke, which is assailed by such frights, finds its peace. But by what a long, circuitous route! In order to experience it in the reality of the images, one would have to remain the contemporary of an osmosis between intimate and undetermined space.

I have presented texts that were as varied as possible, in order to show that there exists a play of values, which makes everything in the category of simple determinations fall into second place. The opposition of outside and inside ceases to have as coefficient its geometrical evidence.

To conclude this chapter, I shall consider a fragment in which Balzac defines determined opposition in the face of affronted space. This text is all the more interesting in that Balzac felt obliged to correct it. In an early version of *Louis Lambert*, we read:

> When he used his entire strength, he grew unaware, as it were, of his physical life, and only existed through the all-powerful play of his interior organs, the range of which he constantly maintained and, according to his own admirable expression, he made space withdraw before his advance.[15]

In the final version, we read simply: 'He left space, as he said, behind him.'

What a difference between these two movements of expression! What decline of power of being faced with space, between the first and second forms! In fact, one is puzzled that Balzac should have made such a correction. He returned, in other words, to 'indifferent space.' In a meditation on the subject of being, one usually puts space between parentheses, in other words, one leaves space 'behind one.' As a sign of the lost 'tonalization' of being, it should be noted that 'admiration' subsided. The second mode of expression is no longer, according to the author's own admission, *admirable*. Because it really was admirable, this power to make *space withdraw*, to put space, all space, outside, in order that meditating being might be free to think.

Translated by Maria Jolas

Notes

1 Jean Hyppolite, Spoken commentary on the *Verneinung* (negation) of Freud. See *La Psychanalyse*, No. 1, 1956, p. 35.
2 Hyppolite brings out the deep psychological inversion of negation in denegation. Later, I plan to give examples of this inversion, on the simple level of images.
3 Spiral? If we banish geometry from philosophical intuitions, it reappears almost immediately.
4 Henri Michaux, *Nouvelles de l'étranger*, Paris: Mercure de France, 1952.
5 Another poet writes: 'To think that a mere word, a name, suffices to make the dividing walls of your strength come tumbling down.' Pierre Reverdy, *Risques et périls*, p. 23.
6 André Fontainas, *L'Ornement de la solitude*, Paris: Mercure de France, 1899, p. 22.
7 *Lettres*, Paris, Stock, p. 167.
8 Jules Supervielle, *Gravitations*, p. 19.
9 Jean Pellerin, *La Romance du retour*, N.R.F. 1921, p. 18.
10 Porphyrus, *The Nymph's Cave*, § 27.
11 Michel Barrault, *Dominicale*, I, p. 11.
12 Ramon Gomez de la Serna, *Echantillons*, Paris: Grasset, p. 167.
13 Maurice Blanchot, *L'Arrêt de mort*, p. 124.
14 Rilke, French translation, p. 106, of *Les Cahiers*.
15 Ed. Jean Pommier, *Corti*, p. 19.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Gaston Bachelard in English

The New Scientific Spirit (1934), trans. A. Goldhammer, Boston: Beacon Press, 1984.
The Psychoanalysis of Fire (1938), trans. A.C.M. Ross, Boston: Beacon Press, 1964; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964.
The Formation of the Scientific Mind (1938), trans. M. McAllester Jones, Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2002.
The Philosophy of No: A Philosophy of the New Scientific Mind (1940), trans. G.C. Waterston, New York: Orion Press, 1968.

Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter (1942), trans. E. Farrell, Dallas: Dallas Institute of Humanities and Cultural Publications, 1983.
Air and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Movement (1943), trans. E. and F. Farrell, Dallas: Dallas Institute of Humanities and Cultural Publications, 1988.
The Dialectic of Duration (1950), trans. M. McAllester Jones, Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2000.
The Poetics of Space (1957), trans. M. Jolas, New York: Orion Press, 1964.
The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language, and the Cosmos (1960), trans. D. Russell, Boston: Beacon Press, 1969.
The Flame of a Candle (1961), trans. J. Caldwell, Dallas: Dallas Institute of Humanities and Cultural Publications, 1990.
The Right to Dream (1970), trans. J.A. Underwood, Dallas: Dallas Institute of Humanities and Cultural Publications, 1988.
On Poetic Imagination and Reverie: Selections from the Works of Gaston Bachelard, trans. C. Gaudin, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971.

Further reading

E.S. Casey, 'Taking Bachelard from the instant to the edge', *Philosophy Today*, 2008, vol. 52, pp. 31–37.
M.A. Caws, *Surrealism and the Literary Imagination: A Study of Breton and Bachelard*, The Hague: Mouton, 1966.
C. Chimisso, *Gaston Bachelard: Critic of Science and the Imagination*, New York: Routledge, 2001.
———, 'Bachelard and the history of the mind', *Pli*, 2005, vol. 16, pp. 171–85.
E.K. Kaplan, 'Imagination and ethics: Gaston Bachelard and Martin Buber', *International Studies in Philosophy*, 2003, vol. 35, pp. 75–88.
R. Kearney, 'Bachelard and the epiphanic instant', *Philosophy Today*, 2008, vol. 52, pp. 38–45.
M. McAllester Jones (ed.), *The Philosophy and Poetics of Gaston Bachelard*, Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1989.
———, *Gaston Bachelard, Subversive Humanist*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991.
———, 'The redemptive instant: Bachelard on the epistemological and existential value of surprise', *Philosophy Today*, 2003, vol. 47, pp. 124–31.
F.J. Macke, 'Body, liquidity, and flesh: Bachelard, Merleau-Ponty, and the elements of interpersonal communication', *Philosophy Today*, 2007, vol. 51, pp. 401–15.
C. Norris, 'Deconstruction and epistemology: Bachelard, Derrida, de Man', *Paragraph*, 1998, vol. 21, pp. 69–100.
E. Rizo-Patron, 'Sites of reverie: the divinatory hermeneutics of Gaston Bachelard', *Religion and the Arts*, 2004, vol. 8, pp. 200–22.
C. Russell, 'Fictive time: Bachelard on memory, duration and consciousness', *Kronoscope*, 2005, vol. 5, pp. 3–20.
C. Thiboutot, 'Gaston Bachelard and phenomenology: outline of a theory of the imagination', *Journal of Psychological Psychology*, 1999, vol. 30, pp. 1–17.
———, 'Some notes on poetry and language in the works of Gaston Bachelard', *The Journal of Psychological Psychology*, 2001, vol. 32, pp. 155–69.
M. Tiles, *Bachelard: Science and Objectivity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
J. Wiskus, 'Thought time and musical time: thinking Bachelard through Messiaen', *Angelaki*, 2006, vol. 11, pp. 179–89.

Chapter 9

HANS-GEORG GADAMER

INTRODUCTION

A student of Heidegger's, first at Freiburg, then at Marburg, German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) is one of the most significant figures to emerge in post-Heideggerian hermeneutics. Present in Gadamer's philosophy is the hermeneutic interest in how one can understand a text produced by another tradition or even another individual, when that text can only be accessed through the prejudices and concepts which are peculiar to one's own cultural, historical, and experiential standpoint. The true locus of hermeneutics for Gadamer is the 'in-between': the gap between the familiarity of a text and its strangeness as the product of another tradition or mind.[1] Where familiarity ends and strangeness begins will be governed by the reader's propensities for seeing connections and drawing conclusions and these, in turn, will be supplemented, challenged, or revised as the strange is made familiar or the familiar is made strange. Conversation, with its exchanges of ideas and revisions of opinion, is a good analogy for hermeneutics' 'novelty through transformation'. Gadamer makes the comparison.[2] He is not thinking of those 'conversations' when you are stuck in the corner of a room with a crushing bore who does nothing but spout on about his own interests and achievements, but those occasions when each person wants to understand and pursue what the other has to say.

> To conduct a conversation [Gadamer writes] means to allow oneself to be conducted by the subject matter to which the partners in the dialogue are oriented. It requires that one does not try to argue the other person down but that one really considers the weight of the other's opinion.[3]

In his short but concisely argued essay 'Aesthetics and Hermeneutics', Gadamer relates the experience of art to the hermeneutic question of how one tradition can understand another. He contests the idea that aesthetic experience is the grasping of an original content, whether this refers to the original experience of the artist or something judged to be specific to the time in which the work was produced. Central to Gadamer's work is the Heideggerian notion that the way things appear to us or have meaning for us is determined by a horizon of expectation which we project in advance of experience. When we study an artwork, Gadamer suggests, the artist's intention to speak meets our own projected desire to understand. The encounter does not reconstruct experience but instead surprises us: it generates new experience through the interrelation of perspectives, and draws attention to our own status as beings who interpret the world. Gadamer appeals to the act of conversation: 'we cannot understand without wanting to understand, that is, without wanting to let something be said... Understanding does not occur when we try to intercept what someone wants to say to us by claiming we already know it.'

All human constructions, Gadamer reminds us, are reflections of a culture's orientation towards the world. This applies to hand tools, to language, and to art. Evident here is the phenomenological principle that all objects and events are extensions of our involvement with them, that is to say, they are ordered and given meaning by us according to the way we interact or potentially interact with them. They exist as part of a network of possible encounters, with one thing always suggesting or inviting connection with something else. 'Everything points to another thing.' To apprehend an artwork is therefore to bring our faculties into relation with the ideas and judgments which shaped the work. The 'what is said', the 'what could have been said', the 'what they wanted to say', and the 'what was impossible to say' of both the artist's frame of reference and our own interact to generate new chains of interpretation. Thus, the experience of art, Gadamer avers, becomes the experience *of experience*, as the distance between ourselves and the artist – necessary for conversation – makes us aware of the temporal, contingent nature of the terms through which we perceive the world.

Notes

1 H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall, London: Sheed and Ward, 1989, p. 295.
2 Ibid., pp. 367–69, 383–88, 461–63, 538–39.
3 Ibid., p. 367.

■ ■ ■

AESTHETICS AND HERMENEUTICS

HANS-GEORG GADAMER

If we define the task of hermeneutics as the bridging of personal or historical distance between minds, then the experience of art would seem to fall entirely outside its province. For of all the things that confront us in nature and history, it is the work of art that speaks to us most directly. It possesses a mysterious intimacy that grips our entire being, as if there were no distance at all and every encounter with it were an encounter with ourselves. We can refer to Hegel in this connection. He considered art to be one of the forms of Absolute Spirit, that is, he saw in art a form of Spirit's self-knowledge in which nothing alien and unredeemable appeared, a form in which there was no contingency of the actual, no unintelligibility of what is merely given. In fact, an absolute contemporaneousness exists between the work and its present beholder that persists unhampered despite every intensification of the historical consciousness. The reality of the work of art and its expressive power cannot be restricted to its original historical horizon, in which the beholder was actually the contemporary of the creator. It seems instead to belong to the experience of art that the work of art always has its own present. Only in a limited way does it retain its historical origin within itself. The work of art is the expression of a truth that cannot be reduced to what its creator actually thought in it. Whether we call it the unconscious creation of the genius or consider the conceptual inexhaustibility of every artistic expression from the point of view of the beholder, the aesthetic consciousness can appeal to the fact that the work of art communicates itself.

The hermeneutical perspective is so comprehensive, however, that it must even include the experience of beauty in nature and art. If it is the fundamental constitution of the historicity of human Dasein to mediate itself to itself understandingly – which necessarily means to the whole of its own experience of the world – then *all* tradition belongs to it. Tradition encompasses

institutions and life-forms as well as texts. Above all, however, the encounter with art belongs within the process of integration that is involved in all human life that stands within traditions. Indeed, it is even a question as to whether the peculiar contemporaneousness of the work of art does not consist precisely in its being open in a limitless way to ever new integrations. The creator of a work of art may intend the public of his own time, but the real being of his work is what it is able to say, and this being reaches fundamentally beyond any historical confinement. In this sense, the work of art occupies a timeless present. But this statement does not mean that it involves no task of understanding, or that we do not find its historical heritage within it. The claim of historical hermeneutics is legitimated precisely by the fact that while the work of art does not intend to be understood historically and offers itself instead in an absolute presence, it nevertheless does not permit just any forms of comprehension. In all the openness and all the richness of its possibilities for comprehension, it permits – indeed even requires – the application of a standard of appropriateness. It may remain undecided whether the claim to appropriateness of comprehension raised at any particular time is correct. Kant was right in asserting that universal validity is required of the judgment of taste, though its recognition cannot be compelled by reasons. This holds true for every interpretation of works of art as well. It holds true for the active interpretation of the reproductive artist or the reader, as well as for that of the scientific interpreter.

One can ask skeptically if a concept of the work of art that regards it as being open to ever newer comprehension does not already belong to a secondary world of aesthetic cultivation. In its origins, is not a work of art the bearer of a meaningful life-function within a cultic or social context? And is it not within this context alone that it receives its full determination of meaning? Still it seems to me that this question can also be reversed: Is it really the case that a work of art, which comes out of a past or alien life-world and is transferred into our historically educated world, becomes a mere object of aesthetic-historical enjoyment and says nothing more of what it originally had to say? 'To say something,' 'to have something to say' – are these simply metaphors grounded in an undetermined aesthetic formative value that is the real truth? Or is the reverse the case? Is the aesthetic quality of formation only the condition for the fact that the work bears its meaning within itself and has something to say to us? This question gives us access to the real problematic dimension of the theme 'aesthetics and hermeneutics.'

The inquiry developed here deliberately transforms the systematic problem of *aesthetics* into the question of the experience of art. In its actual genesis and also in the foundation Kant provided for it in his *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, it is certainly true that philosophical aesthetics covered a much broader area, since it included the beautiful in nature and art, indeed, even the sublime. It is also incontestable that in Kant's philosophy natural beauty had a methodical priority for the basic determinations of the judgment of aesthetic taste, and especially for his concept of 'disinterested pleasure.' However, we must admit that natural beauty does not 'say' anything in the sense that works of art, created by and for men, say something to us. One can rightly assert that a work of art does not satisfy in a 'purely aesthetic' way, in the same sense as a flower or perhaps an ornament does. With respect to art, Kant speaks of an 'intellectualized' pleasure. But this formulation does not help. The 'impure,' intellectualized pleasure that the work of art evokes is still what really interests us as aestheticians. Indeed, the sharper reflection that Hegel brought to the question of the relation of natural and artistic beauty led him to the valid conclusion that natural beauty is a reflection of the beauty of art. When something natural is regarded and enjoyed as beautiful, it is not a timeless and wordless givenness of the 'purely aesthetic' object that has its exhibitive ground in the harmony of forms and colors and symmetry of design, as it might seem to a Pythagorizing, mathematical mind. How nature pleases us belongs instead to the context that is stamped and determined by the artistic creativity of a particular time. The aesthetic history of a landscape – for instance, the Alpine landscape – or the transitional phenomenon of garden art are irrefutable

evidence of this. We are justified, therefore, in proceeding from the work of art rather than from natural beauty if we want to define the relation between aesthetics and hermeneutics. In any case, when we say that the work of art says something to us and that it thus belongs to the matrix of things we have to understand, our assertion is not a metaphor, but has a valid and demonstrable meaning. Thus the work of art is an object of hermeneutics.

According to its original definition, hermeneutics is the art of clarifying and mediating by our own effort of interpretation what is said by persons we encounter in tradition. Hermeneutics operates wherever what is said is not immediately intelligible. Yet this philological art and pedantic technique has long since assumed an altered and broadened form. Since the time of this original definition, the growing historical consciousness has made us aware of the misunderstanding and the possible unintelligibility of all tradition. Also, the decay of Christian society in the West – in continuation of a process of individualization that began with the Reformation – has allowed the individual to become an ultimately indissoluble mystery to others. Since the time of the German romantics, therefore, the task of hermeneutics has been defined as avoiding misunderstanding. With this definition, hermeneutics acquires a domain that in principle reaches as far as the expression of meaning as such. Expressions of meaning are first of all linguistic manifestations. As the art of conveying what is said in a foreign language to the understanding of another person, hermeneutics is not without reason named after Hermes, the interpreter of the divine message to mankind. If we recall the origin of the name hermeneutics, it becomes clear that we are dealing here with a language event, with a translation from one language to another, and therefore with the relation of two languages. But insofar as we can only translate from one language to another if we have understood the meaning of what is said and construct it anew in the medium of the other language, such a language event presupposes understanding.

Now these obvious conclusions become decisive for the question that concerns us here – the question of the language of art and the legitimacy of the hermeneutical point of view with respect to the experience of art. Every interpretation of the intelligible that helps others to understanding has the character of language. To that extent, the entire experience of the world is linguistically mediated, and the broadest concept of tradition is thus defined – one that includes what is not itself linguistic, but is capable of linguistic interpretation. It extends from the 'use' of tools, techniques, and so on through traditions of craftsmanship in the making of such things as various types of implements and ornamental forms through the cultivation of practices and customs to the establishing of patterns and so on. Does the work of art belong in this category, or does it occupy a special position? Insofar as it is not directly a question of *linguistic* works of art, the work of art does in fact seem to belong to such nonlinguistic tradition. And yet the experience and understanding of a work of art is different from the understanding of the tool or the practices handed on to us from the past.

If we follow an old definition from Droysen's hermeneutics, we can distinguish between sources [*Quellen*] and vestiges [*Überresten*]. Vestiges are fragments of a past world that have survived and assist us in the intellectual reconstruction of the world of which they are a remnant. Sources, on the other hand, constitute a linguistic tradition, and they thus serve our understanding of a linguistically interpreted world. Now where does an archaic image of a god belong, for instance? Is it a vestige, like any tool? Or is it a piece of world-interpretation, like everything that is handed on linguistically?

Sources, says Droysen, are records handed down for the purpose of recollection. Monuments are a hybrid form of sources and vestiges, and to this category he assigns 'works of art of every kind,' along with documents, coins, and so on. It may seem this way to the historian, but the work of art as such is a historical document neither in its intention nor in the meaning it acquires in the experience of the work of art. To be sure, we talk of artistic

monuments, as if the production of a work of art had a documentary intention. There is a certain truth in the assertion that permanence is essential to every work of art – in the transitory arts, of course, only in the form of their repeatability. The successful work 'stands.' (Even the music hall artist can say this of his act.) But the explicit aim at recollection through the presentation of something, as it is found in the genuine document, is not present in the work of art. We do not want to refer to anything that once was by means of presentation. Just as little could it be a guarantee of its permanence, since it depends for its preservation on the approving taste or sense of quality of later generations. Precisely this dependence on a preserving will means that the work of art is handed on in the same sense as our literary sources are. At any rate, 'it speaks' not only as remnants of the past speak to the historical investigator or as do historical documents that render something permanent. What we are calling the language of the work of art, for the sake of which the work is preserved and handed on, is the language the work of art itself speaks, whether it is linguistic in nature or not. The work of art says something to the historian: it says something to each person as if it were said especially to him, as something present and contemporaneous. Thus our task is to understand the meaning of what it says and to make it clear to ourselves and others. Even the nonlinguistic work of art, therefore, falls within the province of the proper task of hermeneutics. It must be integrated into the self-understanding of each person.[1]

In this comprehensive sense, hermeneutics includes aesthetics. Hermeneutics bridges the distance between minds and reveals the foreignness of the other mind. But revealing what is unfamiliar does not mean merely reconstructing historically the 'world' in which the work had its original meaning and function. It also means apprehending what is said to us, which is always more than the declared and comprehended meaning. Whatever says something to us is like a person who says something. It is alien in the sense that it transcends us. To this extent, there is a double foreignness in the task of understanding, which in reality is one and the same foreignness. It is this way with all speech. Not only does it say something, but *someone* says something to someone else. Understanding speech is not understanding the wording of what is said in the step-by-step execution of word meanings. Rather, it occurs in the unitary meaning of what is said – and this always transcends what is expressed by what is said. It may be difficult to understand what is said in a foreign or ancient language, but it is still more difficult to let something be said to us even if we understand what is said right away. Both of these things are the task of hermeneutics. We cannot understand without wanting to understand, that is, without wanting to let something be said. It would be an inadmissible abstraction to contend that we must first have achieved a contemporaneousness with the author or the original reader by means of a reconstruction of his historical horizon before we could begin to grasp the meaning of what is said. A kind of anticipation of meaning guides the effort to understand from the very beginning.

But what holds in this fashion for all speaking is valid in an eminent way for the experience of art. It is more than an anticipation of meaning. It is what I would like to call surprise at the meaning of what is said. The experience of art does not only understand a recognizable meaning, as historical hermeneutics does in its handling of texts. The work of art that says something confronts us itself. That is, it expresses something in such a way that what is said is like a discovery, a disclosure of something previously concealed. The element of surprise is based on this. 'So true, so filled with being' [*So wahr, so seiend*] is not something one knows in any other way. Everything familiar is eclipsed. To understand what the work of art says to us is therefore a self-encounter. But as an encounter with the authentic, as a familiarity that includes surprise, the experience of art is *experience* in a real sense and must master ever anew the task that experience involves: the task of integrating it into the whole of one's own orientation to a world and one's own self-understanding. The language of art is constituted precisely by the

fact that it speaks to the self-understanding of *every* person, and it does this as ever present and by means of its own contemporaneousness. Indeed, precisely the contemporaneousness of the work allows it to come to expression in language. Everything depends on how something is said. But this does not mean we should reflect on the means of saying it. Quite the contrary, the more convincingly something is said, the more self-evident and natural the uniqueness and singularity of its declaration seems to be, that is, it concentrates the attention of the person being addressed entirely upon what is said and prevents him from moving to a distanced aesthetic differentiation. Over against the real intention, which aims at what is said, reflection upon the means of the declaration is indeed always secondary and in general is excluded where men speak to each other face to face. For what is said is not something that presents itself as a kind of content of judgment, in the logical form of a judgment. Rather, it is what we want to say and what we will allow to be said to us. Understanding does not occur when we try to intercept what someone wants to say to us by claiming we already know it.

All these observations hold especially for the language of art. Naturally it is not the artist who is speaking here. The artist's own comments about what is said in one or another of his works may certainly be of possible interest too. But the language of art means the excess of meaning that is present in the work itself. The inexhaustibility that distinguishes the language of art from all translation into concepts rests on this excess of meaning. It follows that in understanding a work of art we cannot be satisfied with the cherished hermeneutical rule that the *mens auctoris* limits the task of understanding posed in a text. Rather, just this expansion of the hermeneutical perspective to include the language of art makes it obvious how little the subjectivity of the act of meaning suffices to denote the object of understanding. But this fact has a general significance, and to that extent aesthetics is an important element of general hermeneutics. That should be conclusively indicated. Everything that in the broadest sense speaks to us as tradition poses the task of understanding, without understanding in general being taken to mean the new actualization in oneself of another person's thoughts. We learn this fact with convincing clarity not only from the experience of art (as explained above), but also from the understanding of history. For the real task of historical study is not to understand the subjective intentions, plans, and experiences of the men who are involved in history. Rather, it is the great matrix of the meaning of history that must be understood and that requires the interpretive effort of the historian. The subjective intentions of men standing within the historical process are seldom or never such that a later historical evaluation of events confirms their assessment by contemporaries. The significance of the events, their connection and their involvements as they are represented in historical retrospect, leave the *mens auctoris* behind them, just as the experience of the work of art leaves the *mens auctoris* behind it.

The universality of the hermeneutical perspective is all-encompassing. I once formulated this idea by saying that being that can be understood is language.[2] This is certainly not a metaphysical assertion. Instead, it describes, from the medium of understanding, the unrestricted scope possessed by the hermeneutical perspective. It would be easy to show that all historical experience satisfies this proposition, as does the experience of nature. In the last analysis, Goethe's statement 'Everything is a symbol' is the most comprehensive formulation of the hermeneutical idea. It means that everything points to another thing. This 'everything' is not an assertion about each being, indicating what it is, but an assertion as to how it encounters man's understanding. There is nothing that cannot mean something to it. But the statement implies something else as well: nothing comes forth in the one meaning that is simply offered to us. The impossibility of surveying all relations is just as much present in Goethe's concept of the symbolic as is the vicarious function of the particular for the representation of the whole. For only because the universal relatedness of being is concealed from human eyes does it need to be discovered. As universal as the hermeneutical idea is that corresponds to Goethe's words, in an eminent sense it is fulfilled only by the experience

of art. For the distinctive mark of the language of art is that the individual art work gathers into itself and expresses the symbolic character that, hermeneutically regarded, belongs to all beings. In comparison with all other linguistic and nonlinguistic tradition, the work of art is the absolute present for each particular present, and at the same time holds its word in readiness for every future. The intimacy with which the work of art touches us is at the same time, in enigmatic fashion, a shattering and a demolition of the familiar. It is not only the 'This art thou!' disclosed in a joyous and frightening shock; it also says to us: 'Thou must alter thy life!'

Translated by David E. Linge

Notes

1 It is in this sense that I criticized Kierkegaard's concept of the aesthetic (as he himself does). Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, Tübingen: Mohr, 1960, pp. 91ff.
2 Cf. ibid., p. 450.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Hans-Georg Gadamer in English

Truth and Method (1960), 2nd edn, trans. J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall, London: Sheed and Ward, 1989.
Philosophical Hermeneutics, ed. and trans. D.E. Linge, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.
Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato, ed. and trans. P.C. Smith, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.
Reason in the Age of Science, trans. F.G. Lawrence, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981.
Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies (1971), trans. P.C. Smith, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.
Philosophical Apprenticeships, trans. R.R. Sullivan, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985.
The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy, trans. P.C. Smith, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.
The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays, ed. R. Bernasconi, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
Plato's Dialectical Ethics: Phenomenological Interpretations Relating to the Philebus, trans. R.M. Wallace, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
Hans-Georg Gadamer on Education, Poetry and History, eds D. Misgeld and G. Nicholson, trans. L. Schmidt and M. Ruess, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.
Heidegger's Ways, trans. J.W. Stanley, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.
Literature and Philosophy in Dialogue, ed. D.J. Schmidt, trans. R.H. Paslick, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.
The Enigma of Health: The Art of Healing in a Scientific Age, trans. J. Gaiger and N. Walker, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.
Gadamer on Celan: 'Who Am I and Who Are You?' and Other Essays, eds and trans. R. Heinemann and B. Krajewski, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.
The Beginning of Philosophy (1996), trans. R. Coltman, New York: Continuum, 1998.
Praise of Theory: Speeches and Essays, trans. C. Dawson, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.
Hermeneutics, Religion and Ethics, trans. J. Weinsheimer, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.
Gadamer in Conversation: Reflections and Commentary, eds C. Dutt and R.E. Palmer, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
The Beginning of Knowledge (1999), trans. R. Coltman, New York: Continuum, 2002.
A Century of Philosophy: A Conversation with Ricardo Dottori, trans. R. Coltman and S. Koepke, New York: Continuum, 2003.
The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of the Later Writings, ed. R.E. Palmer, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007.

Further reading

Introductions to Gadamer's thought and to philosophical hermeneutics in general are given by Barnes (1988), Grondin (1994), Lawn (2006), Malpas (2009), and Szondi (1995), with Sullivan (1990) and Weinsheimer (1985) concentrating upon his early work. Critical studies are offered by Davey (2006) and Grondin (1995, 2002), with collections of critical essays edited by Dostal (2002), Krajewski (2003), Malpas *et al*. (2002), and Wright (1990). His aesthetic philosophy is explored by Buckman (1997), Davey (1999, 2002, 2007), George (2009), Harrington (2004), Meyler (2001), Scheibler (2001), Segev (2008), Tate (2009), and Wolff (1975).

For appraisals of Gadamer's position in relation to the history of hermeneutics, and the importance of history for hermeneutics, see Bruns (1992) and Palmer (1969). His relationship with Heidegger is considered in depth by Coltman (1998), Scheibler (2000, 2001), Wachterhauser (1999), and Warnke (1987).

For studies of Gadamer's engagement with competing critical, poststructuralist, and feminist theories of meaning and interpretation, see Code (2003), Davey (1994), Michelfelder and Palmer (1989), Ormiston and Schrift (1990), Risser (1997), Silverman (1991), and Weinsheimer (1991). The question of his complicity with Nazism is considered by Palmer (2002) and Wolin (2000).

A. Barnes, *On Interpretation*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1988.

G. Bruns, *Hermeneutics Ancient and Modern*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

K.L. Buckman, 'Gadamer on art, morality, and authority', *Philosophy and Literature*, 1997, vol. 21, pp. 144–50.

L. Code (ed.), *The Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.

R.R. Coltman, *The Language of Hermeneutics: Gadamer and Heidegger in Dialogue*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.

N. Davey, 'Hermeneutic passions: Gadamer versus Nietzsche on the subjectivity of interpretation', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 1994, vol. 2, pp. 45–60.

———, 'The hermeneutics of seeing', in I. Heywood and B. Sandywell (eds), *Interpreting Visual Culture: Explorations in the Hermeneutics of the Visual*, London: Routledge, 1999, pp. 3–29.

———, 'Hermeneutics and art theory', in P. Smith and C. Wilde (eds), *A Companion to Art Theory*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, pp. 436–47.

———, *Unquiet Understanding*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.

———, 'Gadamer's aesthetics', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2007. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/gadamer-aesthetics/ (accessed 4 May 2010).

R.J. Dostal (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

T. George, 'What is the future of the past? Gadamer and Hegel on truth, art and the ruptures of tradition', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 2009, vol. 40, pp. 4–20.

J. Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

———, *Sources of Hermeneutics*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

———, *The Philosophy of Gadamer*, trans. by K. Plant, New York: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002.

A. Harrington, *Art and Social Theory: Sociological Arguments in Aesthetics*, Cambridge: Polity, 2004.

I. Heywood, *Social Theories of Art: A Critique*, London: Macmillan, 1997.

B. Krajewski (ed.), *Gadamer's Repercussions: Reconsidering Philosophical Hermeneutics*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

C. Lawn, *Gadamer: A Guide for the Perplexed*, London and New York: Continuum, 2006.

J. Malpas, 'Hans-Georg Gadamer', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2009. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/gadamer/ (accessed 5 May 2010).

J.E. Malpas, U. Arnswald, and J. Kertscher (eds), *Gadamer's Century: Essays in Honour of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002.

B. Meyler, 'Linguistic works of art at the borderlines: ontological exclusion in Ingarden and Gadamer', *Analecta Husserliana*, 2001, vol. 73, pp. 289–314.

D. Michelfelder and R.E. Palmer (eds), *Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer–Derrida Debate*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.

G. Ormiston and A. Schrift (eds), *The Hermeneutic Tradition*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.

R.E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969.

———, 'A response to Richard Wolin on Gadamer and the Nazis', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 2002, vol. 10, pp. 467–82.
J. Risser, *Hermeneutics and the Voice of the Other: Re-Reading Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.
I. Scheibler, *Gadamer: Between Heidegger and Hermeneutics*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000.
———, 'Art as festival in Heidegger and Gadamer', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 2001, vol. 9, pp. 151–76.
A. Segev, 'Philosophical system and art experience in Hegel and Gadamer', *Analecta Husserliana*, 2008, vol. 95, pp. 87–102.
H. Silverman, *Gadamer and Hermeneutics: Science, Culture, Literature*, New York: Routledge, 1991.
R. Sullivan, *Political Hermeneutics: The Early Thinking of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990.
P. Szondi, *Introduction to Literary Hermeneutics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
D.L. Tate, 'Art as *cognitio imaginativa*: Gadamer on intuition and imagination in Kant's aesthetic theory', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 2009, vol. 40, pp. 279–99.
B. Wachterhauser, *Beyond Being: Gadamer's Post-Platonic Hermeneutic Ontology*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999.
G. Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987.
J. Weinsheimer, *Gadamer's Heremeneutics: A Reading of Truth and Method*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.
———, *Philosophical Hermeneutics and Literary Theory*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
J. Wolff, *Hermeneutic Philosophy and the Sociology of Art*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
R. Wolin, 'Nazism and the complicities of Hans-Georg Gadamer: untruth and method', *New Republic*, 15 May 2000, pp. 36–45.
K. Wright (ed.), *Festivals of Interpretation: Essays on Hans-Georg Gadamer's Work*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.

Chapter 10

PAUL RICOEUR

INTRODUCTION

The work of Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) spans a philosophy of the will (his early writings), studies of the role of interpretation in psychoanalysis (his middle period), and (latterly) work on the philosophy of language, narrative, and discourse. Despite the transitions in his subjects of study, there is an underlying continuity thanks to an enduring engagement with the phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger. Born in Valence in 1913, Ricoeur began his graduate studies in philosophy at the Sorbonne in the late 1930s where he was influenced by Gabriel Marcel. His work on ontology under Marcel eventually led him to Husserl and Heidegger, since these thinkers provided more in the way of systematic thought, and this is what Ricoeur needed to pursue an ontological treatment of themes such as freedom and hope. As Thompson points out, present in Ricoeur's early work on the will is the thesis that the dualisms of subject and object, and of freedom and nature, are 'not primary', but rather 'attitude[s] which phenomenological description must delve beneath'.[1]

What Ricoeur gets from Husserl is a challenge. In fact, as Ricoeur admits, it is the principal challenge of *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary* (1950), his first book on the will: how to locate an account of wilful, volitional experience in terms of a phenomenology which, for most of the time, as Husserl directs it, is focused on matters of consciousness and perception.[2] What Ricoeur gets from Heidegger is recognition of 'a mutual belonging' between phenomenology and hermeneutics.[3] Any attempt to give an account of the meaning of experience, Ricoeur argues, has to recognize that the nature of language can be traced back to the structure of experience. The former is not distinct from the latter; this, for Ricoeur, is 'the most important phenomenological presupposition of hermeneutics'.[4] Running the other way, the hermeneutic presupposition which phenomenology has to make is that the description of an experience from the experiencer's point of view will always draw on elements which reach beyond the experiencer's point of view. This is on account of the hermeneutic principle that we are always already located within structures that are constitutive of our being in the world; we are always, Ricoeur writes, 'in the middle of a conversation which has already begun and in which we try to orientate ourselves in order to be able to contribute to it'.[5]

It was this commitment to experience always occurring from a perspective or under an interpretation that kept Ricoeur focused on his hermeneutic studies during the late 1950s and early 1960s when the lens of intellectual fashion moved from the ideas of Husserl and Heidegger to those of Freud and Saussure. While the emergence of psychoanalysis and structural linguistics appeared to offer new ways of understanding experience as something which has to be interpreted, Ricoeur was more concerned with the presuppositions made by the two new subjects in their theories of interpretation, in how they understood interpretation to occur and in where these processes were placed ontologically. His *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (1965) locates

psychoanalysis within hermeneutics, and uses the hermeneutic value of interpretation between experience and speech to defend psychoanalysis against the criticism that it does not constitute an observational science. Ricoeur's stance on structural linguistics is less favourable though. While he accepts that structuralist method is valid as a way of examining a phenomenon as a network of differences in the abstract (for example, language understood as *langue*, as opposed to *parole*), he nevertheless criticizes it in *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* (1969) for failing to account for history, intention, and the act of speaking, all of which are all active components in our capacities *for experience and language* as far as hermeneutics is concerned.

The essay representing Ricoeur here is 'What is a Text? Explanation and Understanding', from his later work on the philosophy of language, narrative, and discourse. According to Kearney, Ricoeur's hermeneutic model of the text is 'arguably his most original contribution to contemporary thought'.[6] First published in 1970, the essay shows how Ricoeur uses arguments from hermeneutics to challenge 'the ideology of the absolute text', the growing tendency within poststructuralism to treat a written text as a self-contained network of signs whose meaning is derived from internal relationships between signs. In contrast, Ricoeur seeks to establish how the multiple possible readings of a text stem from its internal structure *combined with*, as Kearney explains, 'a double historical reference *both* to the original conditions of inscription (the world of the author) *and* to the subsequent conditions of reception (the world of the addressee)'.[7] The precise manner of this combination is decisive, for, as Ricoeur sets out to demonstrate, the two approaches to text at work here – internal and structural, on the one hand, and external and referential, on the other – cannot function without the one implicitly falling back on the other.

The question in the essay title – 'What is a Text?' – is addressed through an examination of the relation between explanation and understanding. In the work of Dilthey, Ricoeur argues, the two terms denote mutually exclusive attitudes to texts: explanation is carried out 'in the manner of the natural scientist', while understanding is performed 'in the manner of the historian'. The two stand in opposition as far as Dilthey is concerned because they apply to two distinct kinds of reality: the ambition of the natural scientist is to explain the observable physical world, while the historian or the human scientist seeks to understand another human being's inner, mental life. However, what Ricoeur finds is that the line of demarcation keeping explanation on the side of the natural sciences, and understanding on the side of the human sciences, is upset by two developments: the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, and Claude Lévi-Strauss, and the subjective model of interpretation active in Dilthey's concept of understanding. Structural analysis, Ricoeur asserts, finds that explanation (which had previously only applied to nature) can apply to human language. The problem with this, Ricoeur thinks, is that, in carrying out its explanation of texts, structural analysis eliminates meaningful intention from a narrative and reduces it to 'a few dramatic units', 'a succession of nodes of action', and, ultimately, 'a necrology of the meaningless discourses of mankind'. The second problem is created by Dilthey's subjective model of interpretation. This equates the understanding of a text with the reception in the here and now of what (we think) the author intended. But this ignores the way in which a text can work on us, can 'place us in its meaning'.

The two problems are nevertheless instructive as far as Ricoeur is concerned. What each approach fails to accommodate in its own terms, as he sees the situation – meaningful intention, from the point of view of the structuralist, and a sense of the objectivity of the text for Dilthey's hermeneut – can in fact be addressed by the other, opposite approach. What emerges is a theory of the text which shows structural analysis and hermeneutics drawing upon one another in a way that suggests a complementary relation between them. As far as aesthetics is concerned, the debate is pivotal to questions of the subjectivity or objectivity of interpretation, the status of the meaning in a literary text (for example, how it stands as a form of knowledge), and the difference between speech and writing.

Notes

1 J.B. Thompson, 'Editor's introduction', in P. Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, ed. J.B. Thompson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 5.
2 P. Ricoeur, 'A response by Paul Ricoeur', *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, p. 32.
3 P. Ricoeur, 'Phenomenology and hermeneutics', *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, p. 101.
4 Ibid., p. 118.
5 Ibid., pp. 108–09.
6 R. Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur: The Owl of Minerva*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, p. 29.
7 Ibid., pp. 29–30.

■ ■ ■

WHAT IS A TEXT? EXPLANATION AND UNDERSTANDING

PAUL RICOEUR

This essay will be devoted primarily to the debate between two fundamental attitudes which may be adopted in regard to a text. These two attitudes were summed up, in the period of Wilhelm Dilthey at the end of the last century, by the two words 'explanation' and 'interpretation'. For Dilthey, 'explanation' referred to the model of intelligibility borrowed from the natural sciences and applied to the historical disciplines by positivist schools; 'interpretation', on the other hand, was a derivative form of understanding, which Dilthey regarded as the fundamental attitude of the human sciences and as that which could alone preserve the fundamental difference between these sciences and the sciences of nature. Here I propose to examine the fate of this opposition in the light of conflicts between contemporary schools. For the notion of explanation has since been displaced, so that it derives no longer from the natural sciences but from properly linguistic models. As regards the concept of interpretation, it has undergone profound transformations which distance it from the psychological notion of understanding, in Dilthey's sense of the word. It is this new position of the problem, perhaps less contradictory and more fecund, which I should like to explore. But before unfolding the new concepts of explanation and understanding, I should like to pause at a preliminary question which in fact dominates the whole of our investigation. The question is this: what is a text?

I. What is a text?

Let us say that a text is any discourse fixed by writing. According to this definition, fixation by writing is constitutive of the text itself. But what is fixed by writing? We have said: any discourse. Is this to say that discourse had to be pronounced initially in a physical or mental form? that all writing was initially, at least in a potential way, speaking? In short, what is the relation of the text to speech?

To begin with, we are tempted to say that all writing is added to some anterior speech. For if by speech [*parole*] we understand, with Ferdinand de Saussure, the realisation of language [*langue*] in an event of discourse, the production of an individual utterance by an individual speaker, then each text is in the same position as speech with respect to language. Moreover, writing as an institution is subsequent to speech, and seems merely to fix in

linear script all the articulations which have already appeared orally. The attention given almost exclusively to phonetic writings seems to confirm that writing adds nothing to the phenomenon of speech other than the fixation which enables it to be conserved. Whence the conviction that writing is fixed speech, that inscription, whether it be graphics or recording, is inscription of speech – an inscription which, thanks to the subsisting character of the engraving, guarantees the persistence of speech.

The psychological and sociological priority of speech over writing is not in question. It may be asked, however, whether the late appearance of writing has not provoked a radical change in our relation to the very statements of our discourse. For let us return to our definition: the text is a discourse fixed by writing. What is fixed by writing is thus a discourse which could be said, of course, but which is written precisely because it is not said. Fixation by writing takes the very place of speech, occurring at the site where speech could have emerged. This suggests that a text is really a text only when it is not restricted to transcribing an anterior speech, when instead it inscribes directly in written letters what the discourse means.

This idea of a direct relation between the meaning of the statement and writing can be supported by reflecting on the function of reading in relation to writing. Writing calls for reading in a way which will enable us shortly to introduce the concept of interpretation. For the moment, let us say that the reader takes the place of the interlocutor, just as writing takes the place of speaking and the speaker. The writing-reading relation is thus not a particular case of the speaking-answering relation. It is not a relation of interlocution, not an instance of dialogue. It does not suffice to say that reading is a dialogue with the author through his work, for the relation of the reader to the book is of a completely different nature. Dialogue is an exchange of questions and answers; there is no exchange of this sort between the writer and the reader. The writer does not respond to the reader. Rather, the book divides the act of writing and the act of reading into two sides, between which there is no communication. The reader is absent from the act of writing; the writer is absent from the act of reading. The text thus produces a double eclipse of the reader and the writer. It thereby replaces the relation of dialogue, which directly connects the voice of one to the hearing of the other.

The substitution of reading for a dialogue which has not occurred is so manifest that when we happen to encounter an author and to speak to him (about his book, for example), we experience a profound disruption of the peculiar relation that we have with the author in and through his work. Sometimes I like to say that to read a book is to consider its author as already dead and the book as posthumous. For it is when the author is dead that the relation to the book becomes complete and, as it were, intact. The author can no longer respond; it only remains to read his work.

The difference between the act of reading and the act of dialogue confirms our hypothesis that writing is a realisation comparable and parallel to speech, a realisation which takes the place of it and, as it were, intercepts it. Hence we could say that what comes to writing is discourse as intention-to-say and that writing is a direct inscription of this intention, even if, historically and psychologically, writing began with the graphic transcription of the signs of speech. This emancipation of writing, which places the latter at the site of speech, is the birth of the text.

Now, what happens to the statement itself when it is directly inscribed instead of being pronounced? The most striking characteristic has always been emphasised: writing preserves discourse and makes it an archive available for individual and collective memory. It may be added that the linearisation of symbols permits an analytic and distinctive translation of all the successive and discrete features of language and thereby increases its efficacy. Is that all? Preservation and increased efficacy still only characterise the transcription of oral language in graphic signs. The emancipation of the text from the oral situation entails a veritable upheaval in the relations between language and the world, as well as in the relation between language and

the various subjectivities concerned (that of the author and that of the reader). We glimpsed something of this second upheaval in distinguishing reading from dialogue; we shall have to go still further, but this time beginning from the upheaval which the referential relation of language to the world undergoes when the text takes the place of speech.

What do we understand by the referential relation or referential function? In addressing himself to another speaker, the subject of discourse says something about something; that about which he speaks is the referent of his discourse. As is well known, this referential function is supported by the sentence, which is the first and the simplest unit of discourse. It is the sentence which intends to say something true or something real, at least in declarative discourse. The referential function is so important that it compensates, as it were, for another characteristic of language, namely the separation of signs from things. By means of the referential function, language 'pours back into the universe' (according to an expression of Gustave Guillaume) those signs which the symbolic function, at its birth, divorced from things. All discourse is, to some extent, thereby reconnected to the world. For if we did not speak of the world, of what should we speak?

When the text takes the place of speech, something important occurs. In speech, the interlocutors are present not only to one another, but also to the situation, the surroundings and the circumstantial milieu of discourse. It is in relation to this circumstantial milieu that discourse is fully meaningful; the return to reality is ultimately a return to this reality, which can be indicated 'around' the speakers, 'around', if we may say so, the instance of discourse itself. Language is, moreover, well equipped to secure this anchorage. Demonstratives, adverbs of time and place, personal pronouns, verbal tenses, and in general all the 'deictic' and 'ostensive' indicators serve to anchor discourse in the circumstantial reality which surrounds the instance of discourse. Thus, in living speech, the *ideal* sense of what is said turns towards the *real* reference, towards that 'about which' we speak. At the limit, this real reference tends to merge with an ostensive designation where speech rejoins the gesture of pointing. Sense fades into reference and the latter into the act of showing.

This is no longer the case when the text takes the place of speech. The movement of reference towards the act of showing is intercepted, at the same time as dialogue is interrupted by the text. I say intercepted and not suppressed; it is in this respect that I shall distance myself from what may be called henceforth the ideology of the absolute text. On the basis of the sound remarks which we have just made, this ideology proceeds, by an unwarranted hypostasis, through a course that is ultimately surreptitious. As we shall see, the text is not without reference; the task of reading, *qua* interpretation, will be precisely to fulfil the reference. The suspense which defers the reference merely leaves the text, as it were, 'in the air', outside or without a world. In virtue of this obliteration of the relation to the world, each text is free to enter into relation with all the other texts which come to take the place of the circumstantial reality referred to by living speech. This relation of text to text, within the effacement of the world about which we speak, engenders the quasi-world of texts or *literature*.

Such is the upheaval which affects discourse itself, when the movement of reference towards the act of showing is intercepted by the text. Words cease to efface themselves in front of things; written words become words for themselves.

The eclipse of the circumstantial world by the quasi-world of texts can be so complete that, in a civilisation of writing, the world itself is no longer what can be shown in speaking but is reduced to a kind of 'aura' which written works unfold. Thus we speak of the Greek world or the Byzantine world. This world can be called 'imaginary', in the sense that it is *represented* by writing in lieu of the world *presented* by speech; but this imaginary world is itself a creation of literature.

The upheaval in the relation between the text and its world is the key to the other upheaval of which we have already spoken, that which affects the relation of the text to the subjectivities of the author and the reader. We think that we know what the author of a text is because we derive the notion of the author from that of the speaker. The subject of speech, according to Benveniste, is what

designates itself in saying 'I'. When the text takes the place of speech, there is no longer a speaker, at least in the sense of an immediate and direct self-designation of the one who speaks in the instance of discourse. This proximity of the speaking subject to his own speech is replaced by a complex relation of the author to the text, a relation which enables us to say that the author is instituted by the text, that he stands in the space of meaning traced and inscribed by writing. The text is the very place where the author appears. But does the author appear otherwise than as first reader? The distancing of the text from its author is already a phenomenon of the first reading which, in one move, poses the whole series of problems that we are now going to confront concerning the relations between explanation and interpretation. These relations arise at the time of reading.

II. Explanation or understanding?

As we shall see, the two attitudes which we have initially placed under the double title of explanation and interpretation will confront one another in the act of reading. This duality is first encountered in the work of Dilthey. For him, these distinctions constituted an alternative wherein one term necessarily excluded the other: either you 'explain' in the manner of the natural scientist, or you 'interpret' in the manner of the historian. This exclusive alternative will provide the point of departure for the discussion which follows. I propose to show that the concept of the text, such as we have formulated it in the first part of this essay, demands a renewal of the two notions of explanation and interpretation and, in virtue of this renewal, a less contradictory conception of their interrelation. Let us say straightaway that the discussion will be deliberately oriented towards the search for a strict complementarity and reciprocity between explanation and interpretation.

The initial opposition in Dilthey's work is not exactly between explanation and interpretation, but between explanation and understanding, interpretation being a particular province of understanding. We must therefore begin from the opposition between explanation and understanding. Now if this opposition is exclusive, it is because, in Dilthey's work, the two terms designate two spheres of reality which they serve to separate. These two spheres are those of the natural sciences and the human sciences. Nature is the region of objects offered to scientific observation, a region subsumed since Galileo to the enterprise of mathematisation and since John Stuart Mill to the canons of inductive logic. Mind is the region of psychological individualities, into which each mental life is capable of transposing itself. Understanding is such a transference into another mental life. To ask whether the human sciences can exist is thus to ask whether a scientific knowledge of individuals is possible, whether this understanding of the singular can be objective in its own way, whether it is susceptible of universal validity. Dilthey answered affirmatively, because inner life is given in external signs which can be perceived and understood as signs of another mental life: 'Understanding,' he says in the famous article on 'The development of hermeneutics', 'is the process by which we come to know something of mental life through the perceptible signs which manifest it.'[1] This is the understanding of which interpretation is a particular province. Among the signs of another mental life, we have the 'manifestations fixed in a durable way', the 'human testimonies preserved by writing', the 'written monuments'. Interpretation is the art of understanding applied to such manifestations, to such testimonies, to such monuments, of which writing is the distinctive characteristic. Understanding, as the knowledge through signs of another mental life, thus provides the basis in the pair understanding-interpretation; the latter element supplies the degree of objectification, in virtue of the fixation and preservation which writing confers upon signs.

Although this distinction between explanation and understanding seems clear at first, it becomes increasingly obscure as soon as we ask ourselves about the conditions of scientificity of interpretation. Explanation has been expelled from the field of the human sciences; but the conflict reappears at the

very heart of the concept of interpretation between, on the one hand, the intuitive and unverifiable character of the psychologising concept of understanding to which interpretation is subordinated, and on the other hand the demand for objectivity which belongs to the very notion of human science. The splitting of hermeneutics between its psychologising tendency and its search for a logic of interpretation ultimately calls into question the relation between understanding and interpretation. Is not interpretation a species of understanding which explodes the genre? Is not the specific difference, namely fixation by writing, more important here than the feature common to all signs, that of presenting inner life in an external form? What is more important: the inclusion of hermeneutics in the sphere of understanding or its difference therefrom? Schleiermacher, before Dilthey, had witnessed this internal splitting of the hermeneutical project and had overcome it through a happy marriage of *romantic genius* and *philological virtuosity*. With Dilthey, the epistemological demands are more pressing. Several generations separate him from the scholar of Romanticism, several generations well versed in epistemological reflection; the contradiction now explodes in full daylight. Listen to Dilthey commenting upon Schleiermacher: 'The ultimate aim of hermeneutics is to understand the author better than he understands himself.' So much for the psychology of understanding. Now for the logic of interpretation: 'The function of hermeneutics is to establish theoretically, against the constant intrusion of romantic whim and sceptical subjectivism into the domain of history, the universal validity of interpretation, upon which all certitude in history rests.'[2] Thus hermeneutics fulfils the aim of understanding only by extricating itself from the immediacy of understanding others – from, let us say, dialogical values. Understanding seeks to coincide with the inner life of the author, to liken itself to him (*sich gleichsetzen*), to reproduce (*nachbilden*) the creative processes which engendered the work. But the signs of this intention, of this creation, are to be found nowhere else than in what Schleiermacher called the 'exterior' and 'interior form' of the work, or again, the 'interconnection' (*Zusammenhang*) which makes it an organised whole. The last writings of Dilthey ('The construction of the historical world in the human sciences') further aggravated the tension. On the one hand, the objective side of the work was accentuated under the influence of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (for Husserl, as we know, the 'meaning' of a statement constitutes an 'ideality' which exists neither in mundane reality nor in psychic reality: it is a pure unity of meaning without a real localisation). Hermeneutics similarly proceeds from the objectification of the creative energies of life in works which come in between the author and us; it is mental life itself, its creative dynamism, which calls for the mediation by 'meanings', 'values' or 'goals'. The scientific demand thus presses towards an ever greater depsychologisation of interpretation, of understanding itself and perhaps even of introspection, if it is true that memory itself follows the thread of meanings which are not themselves mental phenomena. The exteriorisation of life implies a more indirect and mediate characterisation of the interpretation of self and others. But it is a self and another, posed in psychological terms, that interpretation pursues; interpretation always aims at a reproduction, a *Nachbildung*, of lived experiences.

This intolerable tension, which the later Dilthey bears witness to, leads us to raise two questions which guide the following discussion: Must we not abandon once and for all the reference of interpretation to understanding and cease to make the interpretation of written monuments a particular case of understanding the external signs of an inner mental life? But if interpretation no longer seeks its norm of intelligibility in understanding others, then does not its relation to explanation, which we have set aside hitherto, now demand to be reconsidered?

III. The text and structural explanation

Let us begin again from our analysis of the text and from the autonomous status which we have granted it with respect to speech. What we have called the eclipse of the surrounding world by the quasi-world of texts engenders two possibilities. We can, as readers, remain in the suspense

of the text, treating it as a worldless and authorless object; in this case, we explain the text in terms of its internal relations, its structure. On the other hand, we can lift the suspense and fulfil the text in speech, restoring it to living communication; in this case, we interpret the text. These two possibilities both belong to reading, and reading is the dialectic of these two attitudes.

Let us consider them separately, before exploring their articulation. We can undertake a first type of reading which formally records, as it were, the text's interception of all the relations to a world that can be pointed out and to subjectivities that can converse. This transference into the 'place' – a place which is a non-place – constitutes a special project with respect to the text, that of prolonging the suspense concerning the referential relation to the world and to the speaking subject. By means of this special project, the reader decides to situate himself in the 'place of the text' and in the 'closure' of this place. On the basis of this choice, the text has no outside but only an inside; it has no transcendent aim, unlike a speech which is addressed to someone about something.

This project is not only possible but legitimate. For the constitution of the text as text and of the body of texts as literature justifies the interception of the double transcendence of discourse, towards the world and towards someone. Thus arises the possibility of an explanatory attitude in regard to the text.

In contrast to what Dilthey thought, this explanatory attitude is not borrowed from a field of knowledge and an epistemological model other than that of language itself. It is not a naturalistic model subsequently extended to the human sciences. The nature-mind opposition plays no role here at all. If there is some form of borrowing, it occurs within the same field, that of signs. For it is possible to treat the text according to the explanatory rules that linguistics successfully applies to the simple system of signs which constitute language [*langue*] as opposed to speech [*parole*]. As is well known, the language-speech distinction is the fundamental distinction which gives linguistics an homogenous object; speech belongs to physiology, psychology and sociology, whereas language, as rules of the game of which speech is the execution, belongs only to linguistics. As is equally well known, linguistics considers only systems of units devoid of proper meaning, each of which is defined only in terms of its difference from all of the others. These units, whether they be purely distinctive like those of phonological articulation or significant like those of lexical articulation, are oppositive units. The interplay of oppositions and their combinations within an inventory of discrete units is what defines the notion of structure in linguistics. This structural model furnishes the type of explanatory attitude which we are now going to see applied to the text.

Even before embarking upon this enterprise, it may be objected that the laws which are valid only for language as distinct from speech could not be applied to the text. Although the text is not speech, is it not, as it were, on the same side as speech in relation to language? Must not discourse, as a series of statements and ultimately of sentences, be opposed in an overall way to language? In comparison to the language-discourse distinction, is not the speaking-writing distinction secondary, such that speaking and writing occur together on the side of discourse? These remarks are perfectly legitimate and justify us in thinking that the structural model of explanation does not exhaust the field of possible attitudes which may be adopted in regard to a text. But before specifying the limits of this explanatory model, it is necessary to grasp its fruitfulness. The working hypothesis of any structural analysis of texts is this: in spite of the fact that writing is on the same side as speech in relation to language – namely, on the side of discourse – the specificity of writing in relation to speech is based on structural features which can be treated as analogues of language in discourse. This working hypothesis is perfectly legitimate; it amounts to saying that under certain conditions the larger units of language [*langage*], that is, the units of a higher order than the sentence, display organisations comparable to those of the smaller units of language, that is, the units which are of a lower order than the sentence and which belong to the domain of linguistics.

In *Structural Anthropology*, Claude Lévi-Strauss formulates this working hypothesis for one category of texts, the category of myths:

> Like every linguistic entity, myth is made up of constitutive units. These units imply the presence of those which normally enter into the structure of language, namely the phonemes, the morphemes and the semantemes. The constituent units of myth are in the same relation to semantemes as the latter are to morphemes, and as the latter in turn are to phonemes. Each form differs from that which precedes it by a higher degree of complexity. For this reason, we shall call the elements which properly pertain to myth (and which are the most complex of all): large constitutive units.[3]

By means of this working hypothesis, the large units which are minimally the size of the sentence, and which placed together constitute the narrative proper to the myth, can be treated according to the same rules that are applied to the smaller units familiar to linguistics. To indicate this analogy, Lévi-Strauss speaks of 'mythemes' in the same way that one speaks of phonemes, morphemes and semantemes. But in order to remain within the limits of the analogy between mythemes and the linguistic units of a lower level, the analysis of texts will have to proceed to the same sort of abstraction as that practised by the phonologist. For the latter, the phoneme is not a concrete sound, to be taken absolutely in its sonorous substance; it is a function defined by the commutative method and its oppositive value is determined by the relation to all other phonemes. In this sense it is not, as Saussure would say, a 'substance' but a 'form', an interplay of relations. Similarly, a mytheme is not one of the sentences of the myth but an oppositive value which is shared by several particular sentences, constituting, in the language of Lévi-Strauss, a 'bundle of relations'. 'Only in the form of combinations of such bundles do the constituent units acquire a signifying function.'[4] What is called here the 'signifying function' is not at all what the myth means, its philosophical or existential import, but rather the arrangement or disposition of mythemes, in short, the structure of the myth.

I should like to recall briefly the analysis which, according to this method, Lévi-Strauss offers of the Oedipus myth. He divides the sentences of the myth into four columns. In the first column he places all the sentences which speak of overrated blood relations (for example, Oedipus marries Jocasta, his mother; Antigone buries Polynices, her brother, in spite of the order forbidding it). In the second column, we find the same relation, but modified by the inverse sign: underrated or devalued blood relations (Oedipus kills his father, Laios; Eteocles kills his brother, Polynices). The third column concerns monsters and their destruction; the fourth groups together all those proper names whose meaning suggests a difficulty in walking straight (lame, clumsy, swollen foot). The comparison of the four columns reveals a correlation. Between the first and second columns we have blood relations overrated or underrated in turn; between the third and fourth we have an affirmation and then a negation of the autochtony of man. 'It follows that the fourth column is related to the third column as the first is to the second . . .; the overrating of blood relations is to their underrating as the attempt to escape from autochtony is to the impossibility of succeeding in it.' The myth thus appears as a kind of logical instrument which brings together contradictions in order to overcome them: 'the impossibility of connecting the groups of relations is overcome (or, more exactly, replaced) by the assertion that two contradictory relations are identical, insofar as each is, like the other, self-contradictory'.[5] We shall return shortly to this conclusion; let us restrict ourselves here to stating it.

We can indeed say that we have thereby explained the myth, but not that we have interpreted it. We have brought out, by means of structural analysis, the logic of the operations which interconnect the packets of relations; this logic constitutes 'the structural law of the myth concerned'.[6] We shall not fail to notice that this law is, *par excellence*, the object of reading and not at all of speech, in the sense of a recitation whereby the power of the myth would be reactivated in a particular situation.

Here the text is only a text and the reading inhabits it only as such, while its meaning for us remains in suspense, together with any realisation in present speech.

I have just taken an example from the domain of myths; I could take another from a nearby domain, that of folklore. This domain has been explored by the Russian formalists of the school of Propp and by the French specialists in the structural analysis of narratives, Roland Barthes and A.J. Greimas. In the work of these authors, we find the same postulates as those employed by Lévi-Strauss: the units above the sentence have the same composition as the units below the sentence; the sense of the narrative consists in the very arrangement of the elements, in the power of the whole to integrate the sub-units; and conversely, the sense of an element is its capacity to enter in relation with other elements and with the whole of the work. These postulates together define the closure of the narrative. The task of structural analysis will be to carry out the segmentation of the work (horizontal aspect), then to establish the various levels of integration of the parts in the whole (hierarchical aspect). Thus the units of action isolated by the analyst will not be psychological units capable of being experienced, nor will they be units of behaviour which could be subsumed to a behaviourist psychology. The extremities of these sequences are only the switching points of the narrative, such that if one element is changed, all the rest is different. Here we recognise the transposition of the method of commutation from the phonological level to the level of narrative units. The logic of action thus consists in an interconnected series of action kernels which together constitute the structural continuity of the narrative. The application of this technique ends up by 'dechronologising' the narrative, in a way that brings out the logic underlying narrative time. Ultimately the narrative would be reduced to a combination [*combinatoire*] of a few dramatic units (promising, betraying, hindering, aiding, etc.) which would be the paradigms of action. A sequence is thus a succession of nodes of action, each closing off an alternative opened up by the preceding one. Just as the elementary units are linked together, so too they fit into larger units; for example, an encounter is comprised of elementary actions like approaching, calling out, greeting, etc. To explain a narrative is to grasp this entanglement, this fleeting structure of interlaced actions.

Corresponding to the nexus of actions are relations of a similar nature between the 'actants' of the narrative. By that we understand, not at all the characters as psychological subjects endowed with their own existence, but rather the roles correlated with formalised actions. Actants are defined entirely by the predicates of action, by the semantic axes of the sentence and the narrative: the actant is the one by whom, to whom, with whom, … the action is done; it is the one who promises, who receives the promise, the giver, the receiver, etc. Structural analysis thus brings out a hierarchy of *actants* correlative to the hierarchy of *actions*.

The narrative remains to be assembled as a whole and put back into narrative communication. It is then a discourse which a narrator addresses to an audience. For structural analysis, however, the two interlocutors must be sought only in the text. The narrator is designated by the signs of narrativity, which belong to the very constitution of the narrative. Beyond the three levels of actions, actants and narration, there is nothing else that falls within the scope of the science of semiology. There is only the world of narrative users, which can eventually be dealt with by other semiological disciplines (those analysing social, economic and ideological systems); but these disciplines are no longer linguistic in nature. This transposition of a linguistic model to the theory of the narrative fully confirms our initial remark: today, explanation is no longer a concept borrowed from the natural sciences and transferred to the alien domain of written artefacts; rather, it stems from the very sphere of language, by analogical transference from the small units of language (phonemes and lexemes) to the units larger than the sentence, such as narratives, folklore and myth. Henceforth, interpretation – if it is still possible to give a sense to this notion – will no longer be confronted by a model external to the human sciences. It will,

instead, be confronted by a model of intelligibility which belongs, from birth so to speak, to the domain of the human sciences, and indeed to a leading science in this domain: linguistics. Thus it will be upon the same terrain, within the same sphere of language [*langage*], that explanation and interpretation will enter into debate.

IV. Towards a new concept of interpretation

Let us consider now the other attitude that can be adopted in regard to the text, the attitude which we have called interpretation. We can introduce this attitude by initially opposing it to the preceding one, in a manner still close to that of Dilthey. But as we shall see, it will be necessary to proceed gradually to a more complementary and reciprocal relation between explanation and interpretation.

Let us begin once again from reading. Two ways of reading, we said, are offered to us. By reading we can prolong and reinforce the suspense which affects the text's reference to a surrounding world and to the audience of speaking subjects: that is the explanatory attitude. But we can also lift the suspense and fulfil the text in present speech. It is this second attitude which is the real aim of reading. For this attitude reveals the true nature of the suspense which intercepts the movement of the text towards meaning. The other attitude would not even be possible if it were not first apparent that the text, as writing, awaits and calls for a reading. If reading is possible, it is indeed because the text is not closed in on itself but opens out onto other things. To read is, on any hypothesis, to conjoin a new discourse to the discourse of the text. This conjunction of discourses reveals, in the very constitution of the text, an original capacity for renewal which is its open character. Interpretation is the concrete outcome of conjunction and renewal.

In the first instance, we shall be led to formulate the concept of interpretation in opposition to that of explanation. This will not distance us appreciably from Dilthey's position, except that the opposing concept of explanation has already gained strength by being derived from linguistics and semiology rather than being borrowed from the natural sciences.

According to this first sense, interpretation retains the feature of appropriation which was recognised by Schleiermacher, Dilthey and Bultmann. In fact, this sense will not be abandoned; it will only be mediated by explanation, instead of being opposed to it in an immediate and even naive way. By 'appropriation', I understand this: that the interpretation of a text culminates in the self-interpretation of a subject who thenceforth understands himself better, understands himself differently, or simply begins to understand himself. This culmination of the understanding of a text in self-understanding is characteristic of the kind of reflective philosophy which, on various occasions, I have called 'concrete reflection'. Here hermeneutics and reflective philosophy are correlative and reciprocal. On the one hand, self-understanding passes through the detour of understanding the cultural signs in which the self documents and forms itself. On the other hand, understanding the text is not an end in itself; it mediates the relation to himself of a subject who, in the short circuit of immediate reflection, does not find the meaning of his own life. Thus it must be said, with equal force, that reflection is nothing without the mediation of signs and works, and that explanation is nothing if it is not incorporated as an intermediary stage in the process of self-understanding. In short, in hermeneutical reflection – or in reflective hermeneutics – the constitution of the *self* is contemporaneous with the constitution of *meaning*.

The term 'appropriation' underlines two additional features. One of the aims of all hermeneutics is to struggle against cultural distance. This struggle can be understood in purely temporal terms as a struggle against secular estrangement, or in more genuinely hermeneutical terms as a struggle against the estrangement from meaning itself, that is, from the system of values upon which the text is based. In this sense, interpretation 'brings together', 'equalises', renders 'contemporary and similar', thus genuinely making one's *own* what was initially *alien*.

Above all, the characterisation of interpretation as appropriation is meant to underline the 'present' character of interpretation. Reading is like the execution of a musical score; it marks the realisation, the enactment, of the semantic possibilities of the text. This final feature is the most important because it is the condition of the other two (that is, of overcoming cultural distance and of fusing textual interpretation with self-interpretation). Indeed, the feature of realisation discloses a decisive aspect of reading, namely that it fulfils the discourse of the text in a dimension similar to that of speech. What is retained here from the notion of speech is not the fact that it is uttered but that it is an event, an instance of discourse, as Benveniste says. The sentences of a text signify *here and now*. The 'actualised' text finds a surrounding and an audience; it resumes the referential movement – intercepted and suspended – towards a world and towards subjects. This world is that of the reader, this subject is the reader himself. In interpretation, we shall say, reading becomes like speech. I do not say 'becomes speech', for reading is never equivalent to a spoken exchange, a dialogue. But reading culminates in a concrete act which is related to the text as speech is related to discourse, namely as event and instance of discourse. Initially the text had only a sense, that is, internal relations or a structure; now it has a meaning, that is, a realisation in the discourse of the reading subject. By virtue of its sense, the text had only a semiological dimension; now it has, by virtue of its meaning, a semantic dimension.

Let us pause here. Our discussion has reached a critical point where interpretation, understood as appropriation, still remains external to explanation in the sense of structural analysis. We continue to oppose them as if they were two attitudes between which it is necessary to choose. I should like now to go beyond this antithetical opposition and to bring out the articulation which would render structural analysis and hermeneutics complementary. For this it is important to show how each of the two attitudes which we have juxtaposed refers back, by means of its own peculiar features, to the other.

Consider again the examples of structural analysis which we have borrowed from the theory of myth and narrative. We tried to adhere to a notion of sense which would be strictly equivalent to the arrangement of the elements of a text, to the integration of the segments of action and the actants within the narrative treated as a whole closed in upon itself. In fact, no one stops at so formal a conception of sense. For example, what Lévi-Strauss calls a 'mytheme' – in his eyes, the constitutive unit of myth – is expressed in a sentence which has a specific meaning: Oedipus kills his father, Oedipus marries his mother, etc. Can it be said that structural explanation neutralises the specific meaning of sentences, retaining only their position in the myth? But the bundle of relations to which Lévi-Strauss reduces the mytheme is still of the order of the sentence; and the interplay of oppositions which is instituted at this very abstract level is equally of the order of the sentence and of meaning. If one speaks of 'overrated' or 'underrated blood relations', of the 'autochtony' or 'non-autochtony' of man, these relations can still be written in the form of a sentence: the blood relation is the highest of all, or the blood relation is not as high as the social relation, for example in the prohibition of incest, etc. Finally, the contradiction which the myth attempts to resolve, according to Lévi-Strauss, is itself stated in terms of meaningful relations. Lévi-Strauss admits this, in spite of himself, when he writes: 'The reason for these choices becomes clear if we recognise that mythical thought proceeds from the consciousness of certain oppositions and tends towards their progressive mediation';[7] and again, 'the myth is a kind of logical tool intended to effect a mediation between life and death'.[8] In the background of the myth there is a question which is highly significant, a question about life and death: 'Are we born from one or from two?' Even in its formalised version, 'Is the same born from the same or from the other?', this question expresses the anguish of origins: whence comes man? Is he born from the earth or from his parents? There would be no contradiction, nor any attempt to resolve contradiction, if there were not significant questions, meaningful propositions about the origin and the end of man. It is this function of myth

as a narrative of origins that structural analysis seeks to place in parentheses. But such analysis does not succeed in eluding this function: it merely postpones it. Myth is not a logical operator between any propositions whatsoever, but involves propositions which point towards limit situations, towards the origin and the end, towards death, suffering and sexuality.

Far from dissolving this radical questioning, structural analysis reinstates it at a more radical level. Would not the function of structural analysis then be to impugn the surface semantics of the recounted myth in order to unveil a depth semantics which is, if I may say so, the living semantics of the myth? If that were not the function of structural analysis, then it would, in my opinion, be reduced to a sterile game, to a derisory combination [*combinatoire*] of elements, and myth would be deprived of the function which Lévi-Strauss himself recognises when he asserts that mythical thought arises from the awareness of certain oppositions and tends towards their progressive mediation. This awareness is a recognition of the *aporias* of human existence around which mythical thought gravitates. To eliminate this meaningful intention would be to reduce the theory of myth to a necrology of the meaningless discourses of mankind. If, on the contrary, we regard structural analysis as a stage – and a necessary one – between a naive and a critical interpretation, between a surface and a depth interpretation, then it seems possible to situate explanation and interpretation along a unique *hermeneutical arc* and to integrate the opposed attitudes of explanation and understanding within an overall conception of reading as the recovery of meaning.

We shall take another step in the direction of this reconciliation between explanation and interpretation if we now turn towards the second term of the initial contradiction. So far we have worked with a concept of interpretation which remains very subjective. To interpret, we said, is to appropriate *here and now* the intention of the text. In saying that, we remain enclosed within Dilthey's concept of understanding. Now what we have just said about the depth semantics unveiled by the structural analysis of the text invites us to say that the intended meaning of the text is not essentially the presumed intention of the author, the lived experience of the writer, but rather what the text means for whoever complies with its injunction. The text seeks to place us in its meaning, that is – according to another acceptation of the word *sens* – in the same direction. So if the intention is that of the text, and if this intention is the direction which it opens up for thought, then depth semantics must be understood in a fundamentally dynamic way. I shall therefore say: to explain is to bring out the structure, that is, the internal relations of dependence which constitute the statics of the text; to interpret is to follow the path of thought opened up by the text, to place oneself *en route* towards the *orient* of the text. We are invited by this remark to correct our initial concept of interpretation and to search – beyond a subjective process of interpretation as an act *on* the text – for an objective process of interpretation which would be the act *of* the text.

I shall borrow an example from a recent study which I made of the exegesis of the sacerdotal story of creation in Genesis 1–2, 4a.[9] This exegesis reveals, in the interior of the text, the interplay of two narratives: a *Tatbericht* in which creation is expressed as a narrative of action ('God made …'), and a *Wortbericht*, that is, a narrative of speech ('God said, and there was …'). The first narrative could be said to play the role of tradition and the second of interpretation. What is interesting here is that interpretation, before being the act of the exegete, is the act of the text. The relation between tradition and interpretation is a relation internal to the text; for the exegete, to interpret is to place himself in the meaning indicated by the relation of interpretation which the text itself supports.

This objective and, as it were, intra-textual concept of interpretation is by no means unusual. Indeed, it has a long history rivalling that of the concept of subjective interpretation which is linked, it will be recalled, to the problem of understanding others through the signs that others give of their conscious life. I would willingly connect this new concept of interpretation to that referred to in the title of Aristotle's treatise *On Interpretation*. Aristotle's *hermenetia*, in contrast to the hermeneutical technique of seers and oracles, is the very action of language on

things. Interpretation, for Aristotle, is not what one does in a second language with regard to a first; rather, it is what the first language already does, by mediating through signs our relation to things. Hence interpretation is, according to the commentary of Boethius, the work of the *vox significativa per se ipsam aliquid significans, sive complexa, sive incomplexa*. Thus it is the noun, the verb, discourse in general, which interprets in the very process of signifying.

It is true that interpretation in Aristotle's sense does not exactly prepare the way for understanding the dynamic relation between several layers of meaning in the same text. For it presupposes a theory of speech and not a theory of the text: 'The sounds articulated by the voice are symbols of states of the soul, and written words are symbols of words uttered in speech' (*On Interpretation*, para. 1). Hence interpretation is confused with the semantic dimension of speech: interpretation is discourse itself, it is any discourse. Nevertheless, I retain from Aristotle the idea that interpretation is interpretation *by* language before being interpretation *of* language.

I would look in the work of Charles Sanders Peirce for a concept of interpretation which is closer to that required by an exegesis which relates interpretation to tradition in the very interior of a text. According to Peirce, the relation of a 'sign' to an 'object' is such that another relation, that between 'interpretant' and 'sign', can be grafted onto the first. What is important for us is that this relation between interpretant and sign is an open relation, in the sense that there is always another interpretant capable of mediating the first relation. G.-G. Granger explains this very well in his *Essai d'une philosophie du style*:

> The interpretant which the sign evokes in the mind could not be the result of a pure and simple deduction which would extract from the sign something already contained therein … The interpretant is a commentary, a definition, a gloss on the sign in its relation to the object. The interpretant is itself symbolic expression. The sign-interpretant association, realised by whatever psychological processes, is rendered possible only by the community, more or less imperfect, of an experience between speaker and hearer … It is always an experience which can never be perfectly reduced to the idea or object of the sign of which, as we said, it is the structure. Whence the indefinite character of Peirce's series of interpretants.[10]

We must, of course, exercise a great deal of care in applying Peirce's concept of interpretant to the interpretation of texts. His interpretant is an interpretant of signs, whereas our interpretant is an interpretant of statements. But our use of the interpretant, transposed from small to large units, is neither more nor less analogical than the structuralist transfer of the laws of organisation from units of levels below the sentence to units of an order above or equal to the sentence. In the case of structuralism, it is the phonological structure of language which serves as the coding model of structures of higher articulation. In our case, it is a feature of lexical units which is transposed onto the plane of statements and texts. So if we are perfectly aware of the analogical character of the transposition, then we can say that the open series of interpretants, which is grafted onto the relation of a sign to an object, brings to light a triangular relation of object-sign-interpretant; and that the latter relation can serve as a model for another triangle which is constituted at the level of the text. In the new triangle, the object is the text itself; the sign is the depth semantics disclosed by structural analysis; and the series of interpretants is the chain of interpretations produced by the interpreting community and incorporated into the dynamics of the text, as the work of meaning upon itself. Within this chain, the first interpretants serve as tradition for the final interpretants, which are the interpretation in the true sense of the term.

Thus informed by the Aristotelian concept of interpretation and above all by Peirce's concept, we are in a position to 'depsychologise' as far as possible our notion of interpretation, and to

connect it with the process which is at work in the text. Henceforth, for the exegete, to interpret is to place himself within the sense indicated by the relation of interpretation supported by the text.

The idea of interpretation as appropriation is not, for all that, eliminated; it is simply postponed until the termination of the process. It lies at the extremity of what we called above the *hermeneutical arc*: it is the final brace of the bridge, the anchorage of the arch in the ground of lived experience. But the entire theory of hermeneutics consists in mediating this interpretation-appropriation by the series of interpretants which belong to the work of the text upon itself. Appropriation loses its arbitrariness insofar as it is the recovery of that which is at work, in labour, within the text. What the interpreter says is a re-saying which reactivates what is said by the text.

At the end of our investigation, it seems that reading is the concrete act in which the destiny of the text is fulfilled. It is at the very heart of reading that explanation and interpretation are indefinitely opposed and reconciled.

Translated by John B. Thompson

Notes

Translator's note: When Ricoeur quotes from a French or German work for which there exists an English translation, I have included in the notes a reference to the latter in square brackets. I have, wherever possible, used the existing English translation of passages quoted by Ricoeur. However, it was frequently necessary to alter the existing translation in order to render the passage closer to Ricoeur's version. In such cases, the reference to the English translation is followed by the symbol '†'.

1 W. Dilthey, 'Origine et développement de l'herméneutique' (1900) in *Le Monde de l'Esprit* I, Paris: Aubier, 1947, p. 320 [English translation: 'The development of hermeneutics' in *Selected Writings*, edited and translated by H.P. Rickman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 248].†
2 Ibid., p. 333 [pp. 259–60].†
3 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale*, Paris: Plon, 1958, p. 233 [English translation: *Structural Anthropology*, translated by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968, pp. 210–11].†
4 Ibid., p. 234 [p. 211].†
5 Ibid., p. 239 [p. 216].†
6 Ibid., p. 241 [p. 217].†
7 Ibid., p. 248 [p. 224].†
8 Ibid., p. 243 [p. 220].†
9 See Paul Ricoeur, 'Sur l'exégèse de Genèse 1, 1–2, 4a' in Roland Barthes et al., *Exégèse et hermeneutique*, Paris: Seuil, 1971, pp. 67–84.
10 G.-G. Granger, *Essai d'une philosophie du style*, Paris: A. Colin, 1968, p. 115.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Paul Ricoeur in English

Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary (1950), trans. E. Kohak, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966.
History and Truth (1955), trans. C.A. Kelbley, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965.
The Symbolism of Evil (1960), trans. E. Buchanan, New York: Harper and Row, 1967.
Fallible Man (1960), trans. W.J. Lowe, New York: Fordham University Press, 1986.
Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation (1965), trans. D. Savage, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.

The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics (1969), ed. D. Ihde, trans. W. Domingo *et al.*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974.
Political and Social Essays, eds D. Stewart and J. Bien, trans. D. Stewart *et al.*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974.
The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language (1975), trans. R. Czerny, K. McLaughlin, and J. Costello, London: Routledge, 1978.
Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning, Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976.
Time and Narrative, 3 vols. (1983, 1984, 1985), trans. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, 1985, 1988.
Lectures on Ideology and Utopia, ed. and trans. G.H. Taylor, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics II (1986), trans. K. Blamey and J.B. Thompson, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991.
Oneself as Another (1990), trans. K. Blamey, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
Critique and Conviction (1995), trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
The Just (1995), trans. D. Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
Memory, History, Forgetting (2004), trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
The Course of Recognition (2004), trans. D. Pellauer, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005.
The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology of His Work, eds C.E. Reagan and D. Stewart, Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.
Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation, ed. J.B. Thompson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination, ed. M.J. Valdes, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

Further reading

Introductions to Ricoeur's philosophical career can be found in Clark (1990), Dauenhauer (2005), Gutting (2001), Hahn (1995), Kearney (2004), and Wood (1991). Ricoeur's work on language and hermeneutics is explored by Arthos (2002), Atkins (2002), Bourgeois and Schalow (1990), Choi (2008), Freiberga (2006), Ihde (1971), Jervolino (2002), Kearney (1996, 2007), Klemm and Schweiker (1993), Tengelyi (2007), and Thompson (1981). His writing on creativity and the imagination is considered by Cecilia (1999) and Wilson (2006). For accounts of his engagement with Derrida, deconstruction, and the relation between philosophy and literature, see Bourgeois (1993, 1997, 2001), Cazeaux (2007), Derrida (1982, 1988), Piercey (2007), and Stellardi (2000).

Narrative, memory, and ethics (especially in relation to subjectivity) are related themes in Ricoeur's later work. For studies of Ricoeur on narrative and memeory, see Cowley (2003), Hannoum (2005), Joy (1997), and Kemp and Rasmussen (1989). His work on subjectivity and the self is examined by Beck (2006), Cohen and Marsh (2002), Daigler (1998), Flood (2000), Gedney (2004), Jervolino (1990), Lafuente (2005), Latona (2001), Schrag (1997), and Venema (2000). Studies of his ethical and political thought are in Dauenhauer (1998), Kaplan (2007), Kemp (1995), Sweeney (2002), Wall (2005), and Wall, Schweiker, and Hall (2002).

J. Arthos, 'The evidence of Bruno's hand: hermeneutic levels in Ricoeur and Gadamer', *International Studies in Philosophy*, 2002, vol. 34, pp. 1–40.
K. Atkins, 'Ricoeur on objectivity: between phenomenology and the natural sciences', *Philosophy Today*, 2002, vol. 46, pp. 384–95.
S. Beck, 'Fiction and fictions: on Ricoeur on the route to the self', *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 2006, vol. 25, pp. 329–35.
P.L. Bourgeois, 'The instant and the living present: Ricoeur and Derrida reading Husserl', *Philosophy Today*, 1993, vol. 37, pp. 31–37.
———, 'Ethics at the limit of reason: Ricoeur and deconstruction', *Philosophy Today*, 1997, vol. 41, pp. 142–52.
———,'Ricoeur in postmodern dialogue: Kantian reflective judgment and *Darstellung*', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 2001, vol. 41, pp. 421–38.
P.L. Bourgeois and F. Schalow, *Traces of Understanding: A Profile of Heidegger's and Ricoeur's Hermeneutics*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1990.
C. Cazeaux, *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy: From Kant to Derrida*, New York: Routledge, 2007.
M.A. Cecilia, 'Imagination and practical creativity in Paul Ricoeur', *Analecta Husserliana*, 1999, vol. 60, pp. 241–64.
Y. Choi, 'Ricoeur and Saussure: on meaning and time', *Semiotica*, 2008, vol. 168, pp. 255–70.
S.H. Clark, *Paul Ricoeur*, London: Routledge, 1990.

R.A. Cohen and J.L. Marsh, *Ricoeur as Another: The Ethics of Subjectivity*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.
P. Cowley, 'Paul Ricoeur: the concept of narrative identity, the trace of autobiography', *Paragraph*, 2003, vol. 26, pp. 1–12.
M.A. Daigler, 'Being as act and potency in the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur', *Philosophy Today*, 1998, vol. 42, pp. 375–85.
B. Dauenhauer, *Paul Ricoeur: The Promise and Risk of Politics*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.
———, 'Paul Ricoeur', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2005. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ricoeur/ (accessed 5 May 2010).
J. Derrida, 'White mythology: metaphor in the text of philosophy', in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. A. Bass, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982, pp. 207–71.
———, 'The *retrait* of metaphor', trans. F. Gasdner, in J. Wolfreys (ed.), *The Derrida Reader: Writing Performances*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998, pp. 102–29.
G. Flood, 'Mimesis, narrative and subjectivity in the work of Girard and Ricoeur', *Cultural Values*, 2000, vol. 4, pp. 205–15.
E. Freiberga, 'Phenomenological interpretation of the work of art: R. Ingarden, M. Dufrenne, P. Ricoeur', *Analecta Husserliana*, 2006, vol. 92, pp. 93–102.
M.D. Gedney, 'Jaspers and Ricoeur on the self and the other', *Philosophy Today*, 2004, vol. 48, pp. 331–42.
G. Gutting, *French Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
L.E. Hahn, *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1995.
A. Hannoum, 'Paul Ricoeur on memory', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 2005, vol. 22, pp. 123–38.
D. Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971.
D. Jervolino, *The Cogito and Hermeneutics: The Question of the Subject in Ricoeur*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990.
———, 'Paul Ricoeur and hermeneutic phenomenology', *Analecta Husserliana*, 2002, vol. 80, pp. 392–401.
M. Joy (ed.), *Paul Ricoeur and Narrative: Context and Contestation*, Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1997.
D.M. Kaplan, 'Paul Ricoeur and the Nazis', *Research in Phenomenology*, 2007, vol. 37, pp. 219–38.
R. Kearney (ed.), *Paul Ricoeur: The Hermeneutics of Action*, London: Sage, 1996.
———, *On Paul Ricoeur: The Owl of Minerva*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.
———, 'Paul Ricoeur and the hermeneutics of translation', *Research in Phenomenology*, 2007, vol. 37, pp. 147–59.
P. Kemp, 'Ricoeur between Heidegger and Levinas: original affirmation between ontological attestation and ethical injunction', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 1995, vol. 21, pp. 41–61.
T.P. Kemp and D. Rasmussen, *The Narrative Path: The Later Works of Paul Ricoeur*, Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1989.
D.E. Klemm and W. Schweiker (eds), *Meaning in Texts and Action: Questioning Paul Ricoeur*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993.
M.A.C. Lafuente, 'Social imagination and history in Paul Ricoeur', *Analecta Husserliana*, 2005, vol. 90, pp. 195–222.
M.J. Latona, 'Selfhood and agency in Ricoeur and Aristotle', *Philosophy Today*, 2001, vol. 45, pp. 107–20.
R. Piercey, 'What is a post-Hegelian Kantian? The case of Paul Ricoeur', *Philosophy Today*, 2007, vol. 51, pp. 26–38.
C.O. Schrag, 'The recovery of the phenomenological subject: in conversation with Derrida, Ricoeur and Levinas', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 1997, vol. 28, pp. 228–35.
G. Stellardi, *Heidegger and Derrida on Philosophy and Metaphor*, Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000.
R. Sweeney, 'Paul Ricoeur on language, ethics, and philosophical anthropology', *Analecta Husserliana*, 2002, vol. 80, pp. 641–44.
L. Tengelyi, 'Redescription and refiguration of reality in Ricoeur', *Research in Phenomenology*, 2007, vol. 37, pp. 160–74.
J.B. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics: A Study in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur and Jürgen Habermas*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
H.I. Venema, *Identifying Selfhood: Imagination, Narrative, and Hermeneutics in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.
J. Wall, *Moral Creativity: Paul Ricoeur and the Poetics of Possibility*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
J. Wall, W. Schweiker, and D.W. Hall (eds), *Paul Ricoeur and Contemporary Moral Thought*, New York: Routledge, 2002.
R.J. Wilson, 'A phenomenological theory of literary creativity: Ricoeur and Joyce', *Analecta Husserliana*, 2006, vol. 92, pp. 295–312.
D. Wood (ed.), *On Paul Ricoeur*, London: Routledge, 1991.

Chapter 11

GIANNI VATTIMO

INTRODUCTION

Gianni Vattimo (b. 1936) is Italy's most prominent phenomenological thinker and commentator on the postmodern. A former student of Gadamer, he translated *Truth and Method* into Italian and, through his critical appraisals of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Gadamer, he has shown how debates within phenomenology and hermeneutics can be applied to questions of postmodernity.

Vattimo's essay, 'The Death or Decline of Art', offers a hermeneutics of the concept of 'end'. The end in question, as the title indicates, is Hegel's 'death of art' thesis and, therefore, embraces the end of modernity, where 'modernity' is understood as the ultimate and final dominion of the universal concept over an individual phenomenon. The essay takes us back to Heidegger's 'Origin of the Work of Art', and shows how Heidegger's ontological treatment of the artwork, in terms of the world-disclosing properties of earth, has implications for the way we classify postmodern art. Hegel's 'death of art' thesis, Vattimo claims, has to be considered in the light of Heidegger's reworking of metaphysics. Art, in Hegel's dialectical account of consciousness, is essentially the practice of making thought visible but, as consciousness becomes increasingly aware that the material is the mental, so the argument goes, art surrenders its material being and becomes conceptual, becomes philosophy. Although art, as we find it, Vattimo admits, has not turned into thought, it is nevertheless true to say that art is no longer an isolatable event; it is now, instead, one practice among many in the mass media. It has either allowed itself to be taken over by technological means of production – in the process becoming kitsch or, with Marcuse, a boundary-transcending source of emancipation – or, with Adorno, refused to engage with mass culture completely.

However, the death of art, Vattimo claims, 'cannot be understood as a "notion" which could be said to correspond... to a certain state of things' but is instead 'an event that constitutes the historical and ontological constellation in which we move'. This is because Heidegger's metaphysics is a departure from the metaphysics underlying Hegel's dialectic and, therefore, a departure from the terms in which the 'death of art' is set. What Heidegger offers is not so much an 'overcoming' (*Überwindung*) as a 'healing' (*Verwindung*) of traditional metaphysics. As Heidegger argues in *Being and Time* and in 'Origin' in relation to art, the absolute, binary ontology of traditional metaphysics, including Hegel's, where something either *is* or *is not*, presupposes a more fundamental ontology in which objects are first allowed to *come into being*, to be disclosed. The way in which ontological conditions make experience possible, the way they underlie it and structure it as an opening, Heidegger argues, is comparable to the way in which a work of art brings a world before us. Things emerge and subside almost with a breathing action, rather than simply switching from 'on' to 'off', on account of the fact that experience is something which is disclosed, brought into being, rather than the mere representation of an external reality.

Heidegger's aesthetics of disclosure, Vattimo declares, changes completely our understanding of the applicability of concepts and the inscription of where one thing or category ends and another begins. Consonant with Bachelard's notion of the concept as 'doorway', Vattimo proposes that the concept does not circumscribe and isolate its referent but, instead, makes it prominent, draws it out, while allowing it to remain a part of a wider fabric of conceptual possibility. The move, he suggests, is away from the 'somewhat grandiose conceptual language' which suited romantic notions of genius and transcendence and towards the acknowledgement of a relational, rising and falling topography of thought. On this account, death or an end is not a moment but a network of transitions in which alternative outcomes are recognized to be potential. Part of the *work* of art, through the world-disclosing properties of earth, is to make us aware that what we initially conceptualize as a negative or antithetical development in fact belongs to a wider complex of association and so any immediate assertion of an end might be premature. We should rather speak of the 'decline' of art, Vattimo suggests, since, in an era of mechanical reproduction and mass culture, elements which are 'assumed to signal the death of art', the possibility of new life nevertheless remains.

■ ■ ■

THE DEATH OR DECLINE OF ART

GIANNI VATTIMO

As is the case with many of Hegel's ideas, the notion of the death of art has turned out to be prophetic with regard to the development of advanced industrial society. This is so even though the death of art in the contemporary world does not have quite the same meaning that it does for Hegel, but rather – as Adorno repeatedly shows – a strangely perverted one. Is it not perhaps true that the universalization of the domain of information could be interpreted as a perverted realization of the triumph of absolute spirit? The utopia of the return of the spirit to itself – that is, the coincidence between Being and a completely transparent self-consciousness – occurs in some way in our everyday life as a generalization of the realm of means of communication and of the universe of representation diffused by these same means, which can no longer be distinguished from 'reality'. Naturally, the realm of the mass media is not the Hegelian absolute spirit; it is instead perhaps a caricature of it. In any event, though, the mass media are not simply a perversion of it in the sense of a degeneration, but rather something which contains, as is often the case with perversions, cognitive and practical possibilities which need to be explored, and which probably delineate the shape of things to come.

It should be noted right away, even if our argument will not proceed any further in these very general terms, that when we discuss the death of art we are speaking within the framework of this effective perverted realization of the Hegelian absolute spirit. Or rather, in what amounts to the same thing, we are speaking within the framework of an accomplished metaphysics that has arrived at its end, in the sense in which Heidegger – who sees Nietzsche's work as a philosophical announcement of this – speaks of such an occurrence. To bring into play another Heideggerian term, the fact that we speak from within this framework indicates that what is at stake is not so much an *Überwindung* as a *Verwindung* of metaphysics.[1] It is not an overcoming of the perverted realization of the absolute spirit, or, in the case at hand, of the death of art, but rather a healing of it and a resignation to it. The death of art is a phrase that describes or, better still, constitutes the epoch of the end of metaphysics as prophesied by Hegel, as lived by Nietzsche and as registered by Heidegger. In this epoch thought stands in a position of *Verwindung* in regard to metaphysics. Metaphysics is not abandoned like an old, worn-out garment, for it

still constitutes our 'humanity' in *geschicklich* terms; we yield to it, we heal ourselves from it, we are resigned to it as something that is destined to us.

Like the whole of the heritage of metaphysics, the death of art cannot be understood as a 'notion' which could be said to correspond (or fail to correspond) to a certain state of things, or which is more or less logically contradictory and could therefore be replaced by some other 'notion', or whose origin, ideological significance, and so on could be explained. It is instead an event that constitutes the historical and ontological constellation in which we move. This constellation is a network of historical and cultural events and of the words which belong to them, at once describing and co-determining them. The death of art concerns us in this *geschicklich* sense of what is 'destined' for us, and is something which we simply cannot ignore. First of all, it concerns us as the prophecy or utopia of a society in which art no longer exists as a specific phenomenon, but has been suppressed and ablated – in a Hegelian way – through a general aestheticization of existence. The last prominent figure to proclaim loudly the death of art was Herbert Marcuse, or at least the Marcuse who was a guru of the 1968 student revolt. From his point of view, the death of art appears as a readily available possibility for a technologically advanced society – that is to say, in our own terms, in a society with a fully realized metaphysics. Now, such a possibility does not exist only as a theoretical utopia. Starting with the early twentieth-century avant-garde movements, the practice of the arts forms part of a wider phenomenon of the 'explosion' of aesthetics beyond the institutional limits which are traditionally assigned to it. The poetics of the avant-garde reject the limitations which philosophy, especially of the neo-Kantian and neo-idealist sort, had previously imposed upon art. Avant-garde art refuses to be considered as a place of non-theoretical and non-practical experience, and instead claims to be the model for a privileged mode of knowledge of the real, a moment of subversion of the hierarchized structure of the individual and society, and thus an instrument of true social and political action. The heritage of the early avant-garde is maintained by the later avant-garde movements, although at a less totalizing and less metaphysical level, which continue to argue in favour of exploding the traditional confines of aesthetics. This explosion becomes, for instance, a negation of the places which had traditionally been assigned to aesthetic experience, such as the concert hall, the theatre, the gallery, the museum, and the book. A series of developments occur – earth-works, body art, street theatre, and so on – which appear somewhat more limited in regard to the revolutionary metaphysical ambitions of the earlier avant-garde movements, but also more concretely within reach for contemporary artistic experience. No longer is art to be rendered out-of-date and suppressed by a future revolutionary society; rather, the experience of art as an integral aesthetic fact is immediately to be sought out. As a consequence, the status of the work becomes constitutively ambiguous: the work no longer seeks a success which would permit it to position itself within a determinate set of values (the imaginary museum of objects possessed of aesthetic quality), but rather defines its success fundamentally in terms of rendering problematic such a set of values, and in overcoming – at least momentarily – the limits of the latter. In this perspective, one of the criteria for evaluation of the work of art seems to be, first and foremost, the ability of the work to call into question its own status. It may do this either directly (and thus often quite crudely) or indirectly, for instance as an ironization of literary genres, as rewriting, as a poetics of citation, or as a use of photography not for creating certain formal effects but for its most elementary function of duplication. In all these phenomena, which are present in different ways in contemporary artistic experience, it is not merely a matter of the sort of self-reference which, in many aesthetic theories, seems constitutive of all art; rather, it is a question of facts which are specifically linked to the death of art in the sense of an explosion of aesthetics which also occurs in these forms of self-ironization of the artistic operation.

The impact of technology is a decisive fact for the passage from the explosion of aesthetics as it appears in the early avant-garde movements – which conceive of the death of art as the suppression

of the limits of aesthetics in order to move toward a metaphysical, or historical and political, meaning of the work – to the explosion which appears in the newer avant-garde movements. Technology is taken here to mean what it does for Walter Benjamin in his 1936 essay on 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. Art's escape from institutional confines no longer either exclusively or principally appears to be linked, in this perspective, to the utopia of metaphysical or revolutionary reintegration of existence; rather, it seems connected to the advent of new technologies which in fact at once permit and determine a form of generalization of aestheticity. With the advent of the ability to reproduce art by mechanical means, the works of the past lose their aura, that is, the halo that surrounds them and isolates them (and together with them the aesthetic realm of experience as well) from the rest of existence. Forms of art are born for which reproducibility is constitutive, such as film and photography: such works not only have no original, but tend to collapse the difference between producer and user because they rely upon the technological use of machines, thus eliminating any argument about the genius of the artist (which is, in essence, the aura as seen from the artist's point of view).

The idea that aesthetic experience is decisively transformed in the era of mass reproduction, as Benjamin contends, represents the moment of passage from a utopian and revolutionary meaning for the death of art to a technological one instead, which ultimately takes the form of a theory of mass culture. This is so even if, as is well known, Benjamin himself would have never made such a claim: he rather distinguishes between a 'good' (socialist) and a 'bad' (fascist) aestheticization of experience. The death of art is not only what will result from the revolutionary reintegration of existence; it is what we are already living in a mass culture, for such a culture produces a generalized aestheticization of life. This can be said to occur because the mass media – who, to be sure, distribute information, culture, and entertainment, but always according to the general criteria of the 'beautiful', that is, the formal attractiveness of products – have assumed in the life of each individual an infinitely more important role than in any other era of the past. An identification between the domain of the mass media and the aesthetic itself is certainly open to objection. However, such an identification becomes relatively simple to sustain if it is kept in mind that, over and beyond the function of distributing information, the mass media serve to produce a consensus through the establishment and intensification of a common language of social life. The mass media do not provide a means for the masses which is at the service of the masses; it is the means *of* the masses, in the sense in which the masses as such are constituted by the mass media as a public realm of common consensus, taste, and feeling. This function, which is usually called (in a pejorative sense) the organization of consensus, is an exquisitely aesthetic one. This becomes clear if we recall one of the fundamental meanings that has been attributed to the term 'aesthetic' since the *Critique of Judgment*: aesthetic pleasure is not defined as that which the subject experiences in relation to the object, but is rather that pleasure which derives from the recognition of belonging to a group – which, for Kant, is humanity itself as an ideal – that shares the same capacity for appreciating the beautiful.

This point of view may be found to exist in different ways: in the theoretical return to Hegelian concepts by revolutionary ideology, in early and 'neo-' avant-garde poetics, and in the experience of the mass media as the distributor of aesthetic products which are also the sites upon which a consensus is organized. In this perspective the death of art signifies two things: in a strong – and utopian – sense, it indicates the end of art as a specific fact, separate from the rest of experience, thanks to the renewal and reintegration of existence; in a weak – or real – sense, it points to aestheticization as an extension of the domain of the mass media.

The way in which artists often respond to the death of art at the hands of the mass media also belongs to the category of death, for it appears as a suicidal gesture of protest. To protest against *Kitsch*, a manipulative mass culture, and the aestheticization of existence at a low and weak level, authentic art has often taken refuge in programmatically aporetic positions which deny

any possibility of immediate enjoyment of the work (its 'gastronomic' aspect, as it were), refuse to communicate anything at all, and opt for silence instead. Adorno finds this to be the crucial lesson of Beckett's work, as is well known, and in various ways sees the same as holding true for many artistic avant-garde movements; in a world where consensus is produced by manipulation, authentic art speaks only by lapsing into silence, and aesthetic experience arises only as the negation of all its traditional and canonical characteristics, starting with the pleasure of the beautiful itself. Even in Adorno's negative aesthetics, as in the case of the utopia of a general aestheticization of experience, the chief criterion for evaluating the work of art is its greater or lesser capacity for self-negation. If the meaning of art resides in its production of a reintegration of existence, the work of art will appear valid precisely to the degree that it leads back to such a reintegration and necessarily dissolves into it. If, instead, the meaning of the work is found in its resistance to the omnipotence of *Kitsch*, then once again its validity coincides with its own self-negation. In a sense that needs to be more closely examined, the work of art, in present conditions, displays characteristics analogous to Heidegger's notion of Being: it arises only as that which at the same time withdraws from us.

(Naturally, it should not be forgotten that for Adorno the criterion of evaluation of the work of art is not only and explicitly the self-negation of its own status. There is instead also the technical tradition of each art to consider, as that which assures the possibility of a relation between the history of art and the history of spirit. Through artistic technique, above all, the work of art is realized as a fact of the spirit, that is, as containing a truth or a spiritual significance. Since Adorno is not an optimistic Hegelian and does not believe in progress, he sees the technical aspect of art as in the last analysis only a means for guaranteeing a more perfect impenetrability of the work of art and as a means for reinforcing its screen of silence.)

In this sort of philosophical phenomenology of the contemporary *Wesen* of art (in the Heideggerian sense of the term), more is involved than merely the different forms of the death of art as a utopia of reintegration, as an aestheticization of mass culture, and as authentic art's suicide and silence. Other facts need to be considered here as well, facts which constitute the rather surprising survival of art in the traditional and institutional sense. For there are still, after all, theatres, concert halls, and galleries, and there are artists who produce works which unproblematically fit into these frameworks. At the theoretical level, this means that the evaluation of these works cannot be based especially and exclusively on their capacity for self-negation. In the face of the different manifestations of the death of art, the fact that there are still 'works of art' in the institutional sense of the term appears as an alternative to the former and as something irreducible to it. In other words, such works appear as an ensemble of *objects differentiated from each other not only on the basis* of their greater or lesser degree of negativity in respect to the status of art. The world of effective artistic production cannot be described in an adequate way solely on the basis of this criterion. We are continually faced with differentiations of value that elude such a simplistic classification, and that cannot be said to belong to it even in a mediated way. Theory has to reflect most carefully upon this problem, since the notion of the death of art – which appears so simplificatory and comforting in its metaphysical compactness – could serve theory as a convenient means to avoid confronting it at all.

The survival of a world of artistic products with its own internal order, however, has a constitutive relation to the three different manifestations of the death of art defined above. It would be easy to show that the history of painting – or, better still, of the visual arts – and the history of poetry over the past few decades have meaning only if placed in relation to the world of images of the mass media or the language of this same world. This is a matter, once again, of relations which in general can be said to belong to the Heideggerian category of *Verwindung*, for they are ironical–iconical relations that at once duplicate and break down the images and words produced by mass culture, but not only in order to negate such a culture. The fact that in spite

of everything else, vital works of 'art' still are produced today probably depends upon this. For these products are the place in which – in a complex system of relations – the three different aspects of the death of art (as utopia, as *Kitsch*, and as silence) are brought into play and come into contact with each other. The philosophical description of this situation could finally become complete through the recognition that the key element in the persistent life of art and in its products – which nevertheless continue to define themselves from inside the institutional frame of art – is precisely this interplay of the various aspects of its own death.

This is the situation with which aesthetic philosophy must deal. Because it persists in always announcing and always once again deferring the death of art, such a situation could be called the *decline* of art.

Traditional aesthetic philosophy has a difficult time taking the measure of this particular group of phenomena, for traditional concepts appear devoid of any basis in concrete experience. It is always somewhat uncomfortable, for anyone concerned with aesthetics who tries to describe the contemporary experience of art and of the beautiful with the somewhat grandiose conceptual language inherited from earlier philosophy, when the former and the latter come into contact with each other. Do we still really find the work of art to be an exemplary work of genius, a concrete manifestation of an idea, or a 'setting-into-work of truth'? Certainly, such an inflated description of the work of art could be undermined at the level of utopia and social critique: we no longer encounter works of art which can be described in these terms because the world of an integrated and authentic human experience is no longer or not yet real. Alternatively, we could entirely reject the conceptual terminology of traditional aesthetics by having recourse instead to the 'positive' notions of this or that 'human science', whether it be semiotics, psychology, anthropology, sociology, or whatever. Both of these approaches remain deeply – or, as Nietzsche would say, reactively – linked to tradition. They both suppose that the world of aesthetic concepts handed down by tradition is still the only possible one for the construction of a philosophical discourse on art. They thus either maintain it by preserving it in a negative perspective (whether utopian or critical), or by declaring that aesthetic philosophy no longer has any meaning. In both cases (although on different levels) we see that the death of aesthetic philosophy mirrors the death of art in the various senses discussed above. The aesthetics inherited from tradition, however, could be neither the only possible conceptual system nor simply an ensemble of notions which are false because they have no connection to experience itself. Like metaphysics (in Heidegger's sense of the term), traditional aesthetics is a destiny for us: it is something to which we must yield, from which we must heal ourselves, and to which we must resign ourselves. The grandiose nature of the concepts which have come down to us from the aesthetics developed within the metaphysical tradition is linked to the essence of this same metaphysics. Heidegger has described it primarily as objectivizing thought, and in general as that epoch of the history of Being in which Being arises and occurs as presence. We may add that this epoch is also especially characterized by the fact that Being arises in it as *force*, namely as grandeur, evidence, definiteness, and permanence – and also, probably, as domination. With the positioning of the problem of Being and time the *Verwindung* of metaphysics begins, and this positioning cannot be interpreted solely as the strategic manœuvre of any single philosopher. Being now arises, as is already announced in Nietzsche's nihilism, as that which disappears and perishes: from the discourse of *Sein und Zeit* on, Being is not that which remains, but rather that which is born and dies.

The situation of the death – or, better, of the decline – of art in which we are living today is philosophically interpretable as one aspect of the more general event, concerning Being itself, which is the *Verwindung* of metaphysics. How is this the case? To answer this question, we need to look at it in a way that has only infrequently been considered by previous readers of Heidegger: what we experience in the moment of the decline of art is describable in terms of the Heideggerian notion of the work of art as the 'setting-into-work of truth'.

In the era of mechanical reproduction aesthetic experience grows ever closer to what Benjamin calls 'distracted perception'. This perception no longer encounters the 'work of art', of which the aura was once an integral part. It may therefore be said that the experience of art no longer arises, or has yet to arise, but this admission is still always set in the framework of an acceptance of the concepts of metaphysical aesthetics. It is instead possible, though, that it is precisely in the distracted experience of art that seems to be the only one available to us in our present condition that the *Wesen* of art summons us in a sense that requires us to step beyond metaphysics. The experience of a distracted perception no longer comes into contact with works themselves, but rather operates in an atmosphere of twilight, decline, and disseminated meanings as well. This occurs in the same way in which, for instance, moral experience is no longer forced to choose between the absolute values of good and evil, but only between micrological facts in regard to which traditional notions appear grandiose and empty, as is the case with art. In *Human All Too Human* (vol. I, aphorism 34), Nietzsche describes this situation in terms of an opposition between the resentful individual who lives the loss of the pathos and the metaphysical dimensions of existence as a tragedy and the individual who is instead 'free of emphasis'.

The Heideggerian notion of the 'setting-into-work of truth' can be, from a philosophical point of view, productively applied to this same situation. For Heidegger, the work is an 'exhibition' (*Aufstellung*) of a world and a 'production' (*Herstellung*) of the earth.[2] Heidegger emphasizes the notion of 'exhibition' in the same terms we use for 'putting on' an exhibition in a museum or gallery, for instance; for it implies that the work of art has the function of founding and constituting the outlines which define an historical world. A society or social group – in short, an historical world – recognizes the constitutive traits of its own experience of the world (for instance, the implicit criteria for distinguishing between good and evil, truth and error, etc.) in a work of art. This idea affirms the inaugural nature of the work, which depends upon Kant's thesis of the absolute originality of artistic genius. However, *Aufstellung* also refers us to the notion, developed out of the philosophy of Dilthey, that in the work of art, more than in any other product of the spirit, the truth of any historical epoch is revealed. The essential element here is not so much the inaugurality of the work, or a 'truth' which could be opposed to error, as the constitution of the fundamental outlines of a given historical existence, that is, what is called (in depreciatory terms) the aesthetic function as an organization of consensus. In the work each individual's sense of membership in a historical world may be recognized and intensified. In this way the distinction on the basis of which Adorno rejects the world of mass-media-oriented culture as pure ideology can be eliminated: for this distinction is one of a presumed use-value of the work which could be opposed to its exchange-value, namely to its functioning only as a distinguishing sign of recognition for groups and societies. The work as a 'setting-into-work of truth' – in its exhibition of a world – is the place where a sense of membership in a group is made recognizable and is intensified. This function, which is crucial for Heidegger's notion of the exhibition of a world, may belong not only to the work as a great individual achievement. For it is in fact a function which persists and is even more fully suitable in the situation in which individual works, along with their aura, disappear in a setting of relatively functional products that have, however, an analogous value.

The full implications of the Heideggerian notion of the work of art as a 'setting-into-work of truth' can be understood, however, only by examining its other aspect as a 'production' of the earth. In his 1936 essay, the idea of the work as a *Herstellung* of the earth is associated with both the materiality of the work and, especially, the fact that by virtue of this materiality (which is never to be understood as 'physical') the work occurs as something which is always kept in reserve. In the work, the earth is not, strictly speaking, matter; it is the presence of the work as such, namely its concrete appearance as something which always calls attention to itself. Even

here, as in the case of the notion of 'world', we need to disentangle the meaning of Heidegger's argument (more than forty years later) from the metaphysical misunderstandings that threaten to compromise it. For the earth is the *hic et nunc* of the work, to which each new interpretation always returns and which always leads to new readings and therefore new possible 'worlds'. If we look carefully at Heidegger's text – for example where he speaks of the earth in the Greek temple as being in relation to the seasons, to the natural decay of matter, etc., or where he speaks of the conflict between world and earth as that in which truth opens up as *aletheia* – we discover that the earth is the dimension which in the work connects the world as a system of discrete and unfolded meanings to its 'other', the *physis*, which sets in motion the tendentially immobile structures of historical/social worlds through its rhythms. In short, the work of art is the 'setting-into-work of truth' because in it the opening up of a world as a context of referrals – like a language – is permanently connected to the earth as the 'other' of the world; and the earth has for Heidegger the features of *physis* (not in his 1936 essay, but in his writings on Hölderlin), which is defined by the fact of birth and growth and death. Earth and *physis* are that which *zeitigt* – or, literally, that which develops as a living being; they are also, however, that which is 'temporalized', in the etymological sense of the verb that Heidegger explores in *Sein und Zeit*. As the 'other' of the world, the earth is that which does not endure. On the contrary, it is that which appears always to withdraw into a 'naturality' that entails *Zeitigen*, namely birth and growth, and bears on its face the traces of the passage of time. The work of art is the one kind of artifact which registers ageing as a positive event that actively contributes to determine new possibilities of meaning.

This second aspect of Heidegger's notion of the work as a 'setting-into-work of truth' seems significant precisely because it points us in the direction of the temporality of the work of art, in a sense that has always eluded traditional metaphysical aesthetics. All the difficulties that aesthetic philosophy encounters in accounting for the experience of the decline of art, distracted perception, and mass culture, derive from the fact that it continues to think in terms of the work as a necessarily eternal form, and, at a deeper level, in terms of Being as permanence, grandeur, and force. The decline of art is instead an aspect of the more general situation of the end of metaphysics, in which thought is called upon to perform a *Verwindung* of metaphysics, in all the various senses of the term that have been discussed above. Aesthetics can fulfil its task as a philosophical aesthetics, from this point of view, if it is able to recognize in the various elements which are assumed to signal the death of art the announcement of an epoch of Being in which – in the perspective of an 'ontology of decline' – thought may open itself up to the only partially negative and 'fallen' meaning (in the sense of *Verfallenheit*) which the experience of aestheticity has acquired in the era of mechanical reproduction and mass culture.

Translated by Jon R. Snyder

Notes

1 Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Pfullingen, Neske, 1954; repr. 1978, pp. 71ff.

2 Cf. Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (1936), in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (1971; repr. New York, Harper and Row, 1975), pp. 15–87. [*Editor*: the essay appears above in full, pp. 87–120.]

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Gianni Vattimo in English

The Adventure of Difference: Philosophy After Nietzsche and Heidegger (1980), trans. C. Blamires with T. Harrison, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993.
The End of Modernity (1985), trans. J.R. Snyder, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988.
Art's Claim to Truth (1985), ed. S. Zabala, trans. L. D'Isanto, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
Nietzsche: An Introduction (1985), trans. N. Martin, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.
The Transparent Society (1989), trans. D. Webb, Cambridge: Polity, 1992.
Beyond Interpretation: The Meaning of Hermeneutics for Philosophy (1994), trans. D. Webb, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.
Religion (ed. with J. Derrida; 1995), trans. D. Webb, Cambridge: Polity, 1998.
Consequences of Hermeneutics, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1998.
Belief (1996), trans. D. Webb and L. D'Isanto, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
The Responsibility of the Philosopher (2000), New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.
After Christianity, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
Dialogue with Nietzsche (2002), trans. W. McCuaig, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
Nihilism and Emancipation: Ethics, Politics, and Law (2003), ed. S. Zabala, trans. W. McCuaig, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
The Future of Religion (with R. Rorty), ed. S. Zabala, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
Not Being God: A Collaborative Autobiography (with P. Paterlini; 2006), trans. W. McCuaig, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
Christianity, Truth, and Weakening Faith: A Dialogue (with R. Girard; 2006), ed. P. Antonello, trans. W. McCuaig, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.
Christ in Postmodern Philosophy, London: Continuum, 2008.
After the Death of God (with J.D. Caputo), ed. J.W. Robbins, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

Further reading

P. Bartoloni, 'Renunciation: Heidegger, Agamben, Blanchot, Vattimo', *Comparative Critical Studies*, 2009, vol. 6, pp. 67–92.
T.G. Guarino, *Vattimo and Theology*, London: T&T Clark, 2009.
T. Thwaites, 'Currency exchanges: the postmodern, Vattimo, et cetera, among other things (et cetera)', *Postmodern Culture*, 1997, vol. 7. Online. Available HTTP: http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/postmodern_culture/v007/7.2thwaites.html (accessed 10 May 2010).
G. Vattimo, S. Zabala, and Y. Mascetti, '"Weak thought" and the reduction of violence: a dialogue with Gianni Vattimo', *Common Knowledge*, 2002, vol. 8, pp. 452–63.
M. Verdicchio, 'The "weakening" of Gianni Vattimo', *Textual Practice*, 2006, vol. 20, pp. 637–54.
S. Wolosky, 'Moral finitude and the ethics of language: a new world response to Gianni Vattimo', *Common Knowledge*, 2003, vol. 9, pp. 406–23.
S. Zabala (ed.), *Weakening Philosophy: Essays in Honour of Gianni Vattimo*, Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2007.

PART 3

Marxism and Critical Theory

Introduction

MARXISM REPRESENTS A BROAD, EXTREMELY INFLUENTIAL, and sometimes ambiguous body of thought. Breadth and ambiguity here are indices of the extent to which the ideas of Karl Marx have been embellished and transformed through interpretation and application. Interestingly enough, this is not out of keeping with Marx's thesis: ideas are aspects of our practical involvement with the world and, therefore, will undergo change through being 'lived'. His is a philosophy which invites application, due to the emphasis it places on the subject–object or individual–world relationship being an evolutionary, open-ended dynamic. The concept of revolution immanent in his dialectic proved to be very attractive to the socialist movement emerging in the second half of the nineteenth century. The economic divisions created by industrialization were becoming increasingly apparent, and Marx was offering a quasi-scientific integration of historical perspective and social change which concluded by sounding the 'knell' of capitalist inequality.

A lot of what has come to be understood as Marxism derives from the writings of Friedrich Engels (1829–95). Marx and Engels were close friends and collaborators – they co-wrote *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) – and, after Marx's death, Engels edited his unfinished manuscripts and became the leading disseminator and popularizer of Marx's ideas. There were subtle shifts in emphasis with Engels's interpretation of Marx. Engels's interest in Darwinism prompted him, in his book *Anti-Dühring* (1877–78), to attribute dialectical transition to nature itself; whereas Marx insisted that transition was a property of *the interaction between* subject and nature. Furthermore, because *Anti-Dühring* contained such an accessible exposition of the unwieldy *Capital*, it was the *Capital as summarized by Engels* upon which the first generation of Marxist thinkers based their position. *Capital* pays more attention to the analysis of one particular socio-economic structure than to the philosophical arguments behind Marx's thesis. Inevitably, claims were simplified and conclusions were allowed to ossify away from the context of the original arguments, thus reducing an elegant thesis to dogmatic ideology. The reformulations of Marx imposed by Lenin and Stalin follow more from Engels's popularized account and are actually antithetical to much of his original writing.

The single, most prominent body of Marxist enquiry in twentieth-century western Europe was the 'Frankfurt School' of critical theory: originally a core group of German-born Jewish intellectuals (Theodor W. Adorno, Leo Lowenthal, Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, Friedrich Pollock) at the Institute of Social Research, established in Frankfurt in 1923, which was followed by a 'second generation' of theorists (Jürgen Habermas, Alfred Schmidt, Albrecht Wellmer) who joined Horkheimer and Adorno when the Institute returned to Frankfurt in 1950 after wartime exile. Their research challenged the alienating effect of rationality which, it was argued, mediated between capitalism, fascism, and Enlightenment thought and, latterly, articulated a social epistemology to counter the positivistic and scientific model of truth as verification. Adorno and Marcuse do the most to develop a critical aesthetic theory, while Habermas relates aesthetic experience to his broader thesis on the overcoming of categorial divisions within modernity.

Mikhail Bakhtin does not fit comfortably into this section, nor for that matter does he fit neatly into any of the categories which have emerged in the history of modern aesthetics. This may be in part due to his tendency to define and develop his ideas in opposition to the ideas of others.[1] He maintains a tense relationship with Marxism, structuralism, and Russian formalism: his work contains elements of all three, yet it is also at a critical distance from all three. Even his own studies tend to avoid the familiar periods and isms which have become the accepted chapters of history. According to Holquist, Bakhtin 'is preoccupied by centuries usually ignored by others; and within these, he has great affection for figures who are even more obscure... It is not so much Periclean Athens or Augustan Rome that attracts him as it is the vagaries of the Hellenistic age.'[2]

Notes

1 K. Clark and M. Holquist note Bakhtin's oppositional method in *Mikhail Bakhtin*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984, p. 187.

2 M. Holquist, 'Introduction', in M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, p. xvi.

Chapter 12

KARL MARX

INTRODUCTION

Marx's principal influence is Hegel. To overcome the incongruities he perceives in Kant's philosophy between thought and reality, Hegel proposes that the two are in fact one, that reality *is* thought. Description, for Hegel, is a positive act because it puts us in a position where we can compare our statement with reality, become aware of its partiality and inadequacy – *a moment in thought* – and then offer a revised, more adequate judgment. Through this dialectic, we eventually arrive at the final stage of Absolute Consciousness when we realize that thought and that which we think about are of the same order. Two aspects of this process are particularly important for Marx (1818–83). The first is precisely that *it is a process*. A statement never stands in isolation but has implicit within it the act of comparison that propagates the next. Thus, each statement contains its predecessor and anticipates its successor – an action Hegel refers to as 'supersession' (*Aufhebung*, also translated as 'sublation'; literally, 'carrying over'). The second point Marx draws from Hegel's dialectic is that we mistake the world to be something opposite and distinct from ourselves when, as becomes clear with Absolute Consciousness, it is part of us, an aspect of thought. The world, in this 'mistaken' sense, Hegel claims, is 'alienated' from us, or 'placed outside' ourselves (*Entäusserung*).

Although impressed by the concept of the dialectic, Marx's early contact with the anti-idealism of Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–72) and the Young Hegelians in Berlin convinced him that the basis of human existence was not thought but social, practical activity. The human being, Marx asserts, is first and foremost related to the world through his or her labour (*Arbeit*). 'Labour' is a technical term for Marx, and it is important to distinguish his sense of the term from the meaning it has acquired within capitalist economies. The concept plays an ontological role in his thesis. 'Labour', for Marx, does not simply denote the work you do or have to do but refers to the physical transformations the individual makes as a being rooted in the world. Labour, he announces in *Capital*, is 'the universal condition for the metabolic interaction (*Stoffwechsel*) between man and Nature, the everlasting Nature-imposed condition of human experience'.[1]

What is distinctive about this labour-ontology is that it is fundamentally social: the interventions we make in the world bind us to others. This is one of Marx's most important claims, argued for in 'Estranged Labour', part of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. 'What is true of man's relationship to his labour, to the product of his labour and to himself,' he asserts, 'is also true of his relationship to other men, and to the labour and the object of the labour of other men.'[2] This sociability Marx calls our 'species-being' (*Gattungswesen*). Man is a species-being 'because he looks upon himself as a universal'.[3] Both man and animals are parts of nature and fashion it to suit their needs. However, whereas animals produce 'only when immediate physical

need compels them to do so', man 'produces even when he is free from physical need and truly produces only in freedom from such need'.[4] Man produces not just for himself but for his kind, for his universal. The human world is a created world, a world in which we see *the labour of others* and where human intervention is a 'speaking to others'.

This might all seem very rosy, but Marx is not painting a picture of the ideal communist state. Rather, he is performing conceptual analysis: showing how key concepts can be related in order to develop a line of thought against capitalism. The concept of 'labour' cannot be separated from the concept of 'species-being'; as a concept, practical activity cannot be divorced from interaction with other people. This, he claims, is precisely what capitalism does. Under capitalism, the labour of the individual is alienated (in Hegel's sense of the term) from her species-being. The basis of capitalism is private property. Those who *supply labour* are divided from those who *own capital*, 'the power to command labour and its products'.[5] The product of a person's labour is owned by the capitalist and sold by him to yield a profit, instead of remaining in a condition of species-interrelationship; what would otherwise exist as a *universal* relationship is objectified into the property of particular individuals. Because one stage of the dialectic is necessarily superseded by another, the transition from alienated perception to Absolute Consciousness for Hegel is an inevitability, and Marx claims this for the relationship between capitalism and communism. Just as alienated perception and the world undergo mutual transformation until their identity is realized, so man, through his fundamentally active engagement with nature and nature *as it is compartmentalized by man*, works towards the abolition of private property and class division and, therefore, to reintegration with his species-being.

The extract representing Marx is 'Private Property and Communism', a fragment from the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, written in 1844 when he was in Paris and only twenty-five. The *Manuscripts* were first published in 1932 by the Marx-Engels Institute but were coolly received. They were marginalized as the 'early writings', in contrast to his later 'mature system', on the grounds that their argumentation was inconsistent with what Marxism had become, and the rigidification which had set in under Stalin did not encourage speculative interpretation. However, these early, philosophical texts are, without a doubt, among Marx's most important writings, since they represent the transition in his thought from the critique of Hegel to the conceptual and ontological foundations of his own political philosophy.

Although Marx provides no specific, sustained discussion of art or aesthetics, the theory of being he proposes holds immense significance for our understanding of sensory and aesthetic experience. It is no doubt already apparent from the definition of species-being given above that art, as something which is *not* produced in response to an immediate animalistic need, is, for Marx, an expression of species-being. 'Private Property and Communism' is, in many ways, an account of how we can think of the aesthetic in these terms. The notion of objectivity is central to the discussion, since it is given two antithetical meanings: objectivity as an externalized object, and as an expressive relation. These correspond to capitalism and communism respectively. On the one hand, capitalism transforms our fundamental species relationship with the world into the ownership of particular things by certain individuals. On the other, communism, in Marx's sense of the term, is 'the supersession of private property': the realization that what is alien and external is in fact social and relational.

Just what 'relational objectivity' amounts to Marx considers with reference to sense experience. A world occupied by private property encourages us to think of sensation as something we *have*: the consumption or possession of something that is other than ourselves. However, in relational terms, sensation is *of itself* objective. The way in which the world appears to us is

determined by the way in which we, that is, our senses, approach it. Just as vision exists for the eye and sound for the ear, etc., so the objectivity of human sensation is confirmed by the fact that the world, through our labour, our involvement with it, is a human world. 'A musical ear, an eye for the beauty of form', Marx argues, only come into being 'through the existence of *their* objects, through *humanized* nature'. This is not to anthropomorphize nature, for anthropomorphization can only occur if the 'human' is situated over and above the 'natural', whereas Marx already includes the former within the latter. With the supersession of private property, sensation ceases to be the having of an item (inward and passive) and becomes an expression (outward and active) of participation in species-being. The labour of the artist becomes the manipulation of human media, e.g. paint, or the humanization of matter, e.g. stone, with the intention of making the finished object 'speak' to its audience. This is aesthetics as sociability. The immersion of the human in the natural sees Marx extend the entwinement of concept and object inaugurated by Kant and Hegel and, in so doing, finds him anticipating phenomenology's presentation of the aesthetic in terms of disclosure and conversation.

Notes

1 Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, Moscow, 1965, pp. 183–84, and quoted by Lucio Colletti in Marx, *Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton, London: Penguin, 1992, p. 28.
2 Marx, 'Estranged labour', *Early Writings*, p. 330.
3 Ibid., p. 327.
4 Ibid., p. 329.
5 Marx, 'Profit of capital', *Early Writings*, p. 295.

■ ■ ■

PRIVATE PROPERTY AND COMMUNISM

KARL MARX

ad page xxxix.[1] But the antithesis between *propertylessness* and *property* is still an indifferent antithesis, not grasped in its *active connection*, its *inner* relation, not yet grasped as *contradiction*, as long as it is not understood as the antithesis between *labour* and *capital*. In its initial form this antithesis can manifest itself even without the advanced development of private property, as for example in ancient Rome, in Turkey, etc. In such cases it does not yet *appear* as established by private property itself. But labour, the subjective essence of private property as exclusion of property, and capital, objective labour as exclusion of labour, constitute *private property* in its developed relation of contradiction: a vigorous relation, therefore, driving towards resolution.

ad ibidem. The supersession [*Aufhebung*] of self-estrangement follows the same course as self-estrangement. *Private property* is first considered only in its objective aspect, but still with labour as its essence. Its form of existence is therefore capital, which is to be abolished 'as such' (Proudhon). Or the *particular form* of labour – levelled down, parcelled and therefore unfree – is taken as the source of the *harmfulness* of private property and its humanly estranged existence. For example, Fourier, like the Physiocrats, regarded agriculture as at least the *best* form of labour, while Saint-Simon on the other hand declared *industrial labour* as such to be the essence and consequently wants *exclusive* rule by the industrialists and the improvement of the condition of the workers. Finally, *communism*[2] is the *positive* expression of the abolition of private property and at first appears as universal private property. In grasping this relation in its universality, communism is

(1) in its initial form only a *generalization* and *completion* of that relation (of private property). As such it appears in a dual form: on the one hand the domination of *material* property bulks so large that it threatens to destroy *everything* which is not capable of being possessed by everyone as private property; it wants to abstract from talent, etc., by *force*. Physical, immediate *possession* is the only purpose of life and existence as far as this communism is concerned; the category of *worker* is not abolished but extended to all men; the relation of private property remains the relation of the community to the world of things; ultimately this movement to oppose universal private property to private property is expressed in bestial form – *marriage* (which is admittedly a *form* of *exclusive private property*) is counterposed to the *community of women*, where women become *communal* and *common* property. One might say that this idea of a *community of women* is the *revealed secret* of this as yet wholly crude and unthinking communism. Just as women are to go from marriage into general prostitution, so the whole world of wealth – i.e. the objective essence of man – is to make the transition from the relation of exclusive marriage with the private owner to the relation of universal prostitution with the community. This communism, inasmuch as it negates the *personality* of man in every sphere, is simply the logical expression of the private property which is this negation. Universal *envy* constituting itself as a power is the hidden form in which *greed* reasserts itself and satisfies itself, but in *another* way. The thoughts of every piece of private property as such are *at least* turned against *richer* private property in the form of envy and the desire to level everything down; hence these feelings in fact constitute the essence of competition. The crude communist is merely the culmination of this envy and desire to level down on the basis of a *preconceived* minimum. It has a *definite*, *limited* measure. How little this abolition of private property is a true appropriation is shown by the abstract negation of the entire world of culture and civilization, and the return to the *unnatural* simplicity of the *poor*, unrefined man who has no needs and who has not even reached the stage of private property, let alone gone beyond it.

(For crude communism) the community is simply a community of *labour* and equality of *wages*, which are paid out by the communal capital, the *community* as universal capitalist. Both sides of the relation are raised to an *imaginary* universality – *labour* as the condition in which everyone is placed and *capital* as the acknowledged universality and power of the community.

In the relationship with *woman*, as the *prey* and handmaid of communal lust, is expressed the infinite degradation in which man exists for himself, for the secret of this relationship has its *unambiguous*, decisive, *open* and revealed expression in the relationship of *man* to *woman* and in the manner in which the *direct*, *natural* species-relationship is conceived. The immediate, natural, necessary relation of human being to human being is the *relationship* of *man* to *woman*. In this *natural* species-relationship the relation of man to nature is immediately his relation to man, just as his relation to man is immediately his relation to nature, his own *natural* condition. Therefore this relationship *reveals* in a *sensuous* form, reduced to an observable *fact*, the extent to which the human essence has become nature for man or nature has become the human essence for man. It is possible to judge from this relationship the entire level of development of mankind. It follows from the character of this relationship how far *man* as a *species-being*, as *man*, has become himself and grasped himself; the relation of man to woman is the most *natural* relation of human being to human being. It therefore demonstrates the extent to which man's *natural* behaviour has become *human* or the extent to which his *human* essence has become a *natural* essence for him, the extent to which his *human nature* has become *nature* for him. This relationship also demonstrates the extent to which man's *needs* have become *human* needs, hence the extent to which the *other*, as a human being, has become a need for him, the extent to which in his most individual existence he is at the same time a communal being.

The first positive abolition of private property – *crude* communism – is therefore only a *manifestation* of the vileness of private property trying to establish itself as the *positive community*.

(2) Communism (a) still of a political nature, democratic or despotic; (b) with the abolition of the state, but still essentially incomplete and influenced by private property, i.e. by the estrangement of man. In both forms communism already knows itself as the reintegration or return of man into himself, the supersession of man's self-estrangement; but since it has not yet comprehended the positive essence of private property or understood the *human* nature of need, it is still held captive and contaminated by private property. True, it has understood its concept, but not yet its essence.

(3) *Communism*[3] is the *positive* supersession of *private property* as *human self-estrangement*, and hence the true *appropriation* of the *human* essence through and for man; it is the complete restoration of man to himself as a *social*, i.e. human, being, a restoration which has become conscious and which takes place within the entire wealth of previous periods of development. This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and nature, and between man and man, the true resolution of the conflict between existence and being, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be the solution.

The entire movement of history is therefore both the *actual* act of creation of communism – the birth of its empirical existence – and, for its thinking consciousness, the *comprehended* and *known* movement of its *becoming*; whereas the other communism, which is not yet fully developed, seeks in isolated historical forms opposed to private property a historical proof for itself, a proof drawn from what already exists, by wrenching isolated moments from their proper places in the process of development (a hobby horse Cabet, Villegardelle, etc., particularly like to ride) and advancing them as proofs of its historical pedigree. But all it succeeds in showing is that by far the greater part of this development contradicts its assertions and that if it did once exist, then the very fact that it existed in the *past* refutes its claim to *essential being* [*Wesen*].

It is easy to see how necessary it is for the whole revolutionary movement to find both its empirical and its theoretical basis in the movement of *private property* or, to be more exact, of the economy.

This *material*, immediately *sensuous* private property is the material, sensuous expression of *estranged human* life. Its movement – production and consumption – is the sensuous revelation of the movement of all previous production, i.e. the realization or reality of man. Religion, the family, the state, law, morality, science, art, etc., are only *particular* modes of production and therefore come under its general law. The positive supersession of *private property*, as the appropriation of *human* life, is therefore the positive supersession of all estrangement, and the return of man from religion, the family, the state, etc., to his *human*, i.e. *social*, existence. Religious estrangement as such takes place only in the sphere *of consciousness*, of man's inner life, but economic estrangement is that of *real life* – its supersession therefore embraces both aspects. Clearly the nature of the movement in different countries initially depends on whether the actual and *acknowledged* life of the people has its being more in consciousness or in the external world, in ideal or in real life. Communism begins with atheism (Owen), but atheism is initially far from being *communism*, and is for the most part an abstraction. The philanthropy of atheism is therefore at first nothing more than an abstract *philosophical* philanthropy, while that of communism is at once *real* and directly bent towards *action*.

We have seen how, assuming the positive supersession of private property, man produces man, himself and other men; how the object, which is the direct activity of his individuality, is at the same time his existence for other men, their existence and their existence for him. Similarly, however, both the material of labour and man as subject are the starting-point as well as the outcome of the movement (and the historical *necessity* of private property lies precisely in

the fact that they must be this starting-point). So the *social* character is the general character of the whole movement; *just as* society itself produces *man* as *man*, so it is *produced* by him. Activity and consumption, both in their content and in their *mode of existence*, are *social* activity and *social* consumption. The *human* essence of nature exists only for *social* man; for only here does nature exist for him as a *bond* with other *men*, as his existence for others and their existence for him, as the vital element of human reality; only here does it exist as the *basis* of his own *human* existence. Only here has his *natural* existence become his *human* existence and nature become man for him. *Society* is therefore the perfected unity in essence of man with nature, the true resurrection of nature, the realized naturalism of man and the realized humanism of nature.[4]

Social activity and social consumption by no means exist *solely* in the form of a *directly* communal activity and a directly *communal* consumption, even though *communal* activity and *communal* consumption, i.e. activity and consumption that express and confirm themselves directly in *real association* with other men, occur wherever that *direct* expression of sociality [*Gesellschaftlichkeit*] springs from the essential nature of the content of the activity and is appropriate to the nature of the consumption.

But even if I am active in the field of science, etc. – an activity which I am seldom able to perform in direct association with other men – I am still *socially* active because I am active as a *man*. It is not only the material of my activity – including even the language in which the thinker is active – which I receive as a social product. My *own* existence *is* social activity. Therefore what I create from myself I create for society, conscious of myself as a social being.

My *universal* consciousness is only the *theoretical* form of that whose *living* form is the *real* community, society, whereas at present *universal* consciousness is an abstraction from real life and as such in hostile opposition to it. Hence the *activity* of my universal consciousness – as activity – is my *theoretical* existence as a social being.

It is above all necessary to avoid once more establishing 'society' as an abstraction over against the individual. The individual *is* the *social being*. His vital expression – even when it does not appear in the direct form of a *communal* expression, conceived in association with other men – is therefore an expression and confirmation of *social life*. Man's individual and species-life are not two *distinct things*, however much – and this is necessarily so – the mode of existence of individual life is a more *particular* or a more *general* mode of the species-life, or species-life a more *particular* or more *general* individual life.

As *species-consciousness* man confirms his real *social life* and merely repeats in thought his actual existence; conversely, species-being confirms itself in species-consciousness and exists for itself in its universality, as a thinking being.

Man, however much he may therefore be a *particular* individual – and it is just this particularity which makes him an individual and a real *individual* communal being – is just as much the *totality*, the ideal totality, the subjective existence of thought and experienced society for itself; he also exists in reality as the contemplation and true enjoyment of social existence and as a totality of vital human expression.

It is true that thought and being are *distinct*, but at the same time they are in *unity* with one another.

Death appears as the harsh victory of the species over the particular individual, and seemingly contradicts their unity; but the particular individual is only a *particular species-being*, and as such mortal.

(4) Just as *private property* is only the sensuous expression of the fact that man becomes *objective* for himself and at the same time becomes an alien and inhuman object for himself, that his expression of life [*Lebensäusserung*] is his alienation of life [*Lebensentäusserung*], and that his realization is a loss of reality, an *alien* reality, so the positive supersession of private property, i.e. the *sensuous* appropriation of the human essence and human life, of objective man and of human

works by and for man, should not be understood only in the sense of *direct*, one-sided *consumption*, of *possession*, of *having*. Man appropriates his integral essence in an integral way, as a total man. All his *human* relations to the world – seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, contemplating, sensing, wanting, acting, loving – in short, all the organs of his individuality, like the organs which are directly communal in form, are in their *objective* approach or in their *approach to the object* the appropriation of that object. This appropriation of *human* reality, their approach to the object, is the *confirmation of human reality*.[5] It is human *effectiveness* and human *suffering*, for suffering, humanly conceived, is an enjoyment of the self for man.

Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is only *ours* when we have it, when it exists for us as capital or when we directly possess, eat, drink, wear, inhabit it, etc., in short, when we *use* it. Although private property conceives all these immediate realizations of possession only as *means of life*; and the life they serve is the *life* of *private property*, labour and capitalization.

Therefore *all* the physical and intellectual senses have been replaced by the simple estrangement of *all* these senses – the sense of *having*. So that it might give birth to its inner wealth, human nature had to be reduced to this absolute poverty. (On the category of *having* see Hess in *Einundzwanzig Bogen*.)[6]

The supersession of private property is therefore the complete *emancipation* of all human senses and attributes; but it is this emancipation precisely because these senses and attributes have become *human*, subjectively as well as objectively. The eye has become a *human eye*, just as its *object* has become a social, *human* object, made by man for man. The *senses* have therefore become *theoreticians* in their immediate praxis. They relate to the *thing* for its own sake, but the thing itself is an *objective human* relation to itself and to man,[7] and vice versa. Need or enjoyment have therefore lost their *egoistic* nature, and nature has lost its mere *utility* in the sense that its use has become *human* use.

Similarly, the senses and enjoyment of other men have become my *own* appropriation. Apart from these direct organs, *social* organs are therefore created in the *form* of society; for example, activity in direct association with others, etc. has become an organ of my *life expression* and a mode of appropriation of *human* life.

Obviously the *human* eye takes in things in a different way from the crude non-human eye, the human *ear* in a different way from the crude ear, etc.

To sum up: it is only when man's object becomes a *human* object or objective man that man does not lose himself in that object. This is only possible when it becomes a *social* object for him and when he himself becomes a social being for himself, just as society becomes a being for him in this object.

On the one hand, therefore, it is only when objective reality universally becomes for man in society the reality of man's essential powers, becomes human reality, and thus the reality of his *own* essential powers, that all *objects* become for him the *objectification of himself*, objects that confirm and realize his individuality, *his* objects, i.e. *he himself* becomes the object. The *manner* in which they become his depends on the *nature* of the *object* and the nature of the *essential power* that corresponds to *it*; for it is just the *determinateness* of this relation that constitutes the particular, *real* mode of affirmation. An object is different for the *eye* from what it is for the *ear*, and the eye's object *is* different from the *ear's*. The peculiarity of each essential power is precisely its *peculiar essence*, and thus also the peculiar mode of its objectification, of its *objectively real*, living *being*. Man is therefore affirmed in the objective world not only in thought but with *all* the senses.

On the other hand, let us look at the question in its subjective aspect: only music can awaken the musical sense in man and the most beautiful music has *no* sense for the unmusical ear, because my object can only be the confirmation of one of my essential powers, i.e. can only be for me in so far as my essential power exists for me as a subjective attribute (this is because the sense of an

object for me extends only as far as *my* sense extends, only has sense for a sense that corresponds to that object). In the same way, and for the same reasons, the *senses* of social man are *different* from those of non-social man. Only through the objectively unfolded wealth of human nature can the wealth of subjective *human* sensitivity – a musical ear, an eye for the beauty of form, in short, *senses* capable of human gratification – be either cultivated or created. For not only the five senses, but also the so-called spiritual senses, the practical senses (will, love, etc.), in a word, the *human* sense, the humanity of the senses – all these come into being only through the existence of *their* objects, through *humanized* nature. The *cultivation* of the five senses is the work of all previous history. *Sense* which is a prisoner of crude practical need has only a *restricted* sense. For a man who is starving the human form of food does not exist, only its abstract form exists; it could just as well be present in its crudest form, and it would be hard to say how this way of eating differs from that of *animals*. The man who is burdened with worries and needs has no *sense* for the finest of plays; the dealer in minerals sees only the commercial value, and not the beauty and peculiar nature of the minerals; he lacks a mineralogical sense; thus the objectification of the human essence, in a theoretical as well as a practical respect, is necessary both in order to make man's *senses human* and to create an appropriate *human sense* for the whole of the wealth of humanity and of nature.

Just as in its initial stages society is presented with all the material for this *cultural development* through the movement of *private property* and of its wealth and poverty – both material and intellectual wealth and poverty – so the society that is *fully developed* produces man in all the richness of his being, the *rich* man who is *profoundly and abundantly endowed with all the senses*, as its constant reality. It can be seen how subjectivism and objectivism, spiritualism and materialism, activity and passivity [*Leiden*], lose their antithetical character, and hence their existence as such antitheses, only in the social condition; it can be seen how the resolution of the *theoretical* antitheses themselves is possible *only* in a *practical* way, only through the practical energy of man, and how their resolution is for that reason by no means only a problem of knowledge, but a *real* problem of life, a problem which *philosophy* was unable to solve precisely because it treated it as a *purely* theoretical problem.

It can be seen how the history of *industry* and the *objective* existence of industry as it has developed is the *open* book of the essential powers of man, man's psychology present in tangible form; up to now this history has not been grasped in its connection with the *nature* of man, but only in an external utilitarian aspect, for man, moving in the realm of estrangement, was only capable of conceiving the general existence of man – religion, or history in its abstract and universal form of politics, art, literature, etc. – as the reality of man's essential powers and as *man's species-activity*. In *everyday, material industry* (which can just as easily be considered as a part of that general development as that general development itself can be considered as a *particular* part of industry, since all human activity up to now has been labour, i.e. industry, self-estranged activity) we find ourselves confronted with the *objectified powers of the human essence*, in the form of *sensuous, alien, useful objects*, in the form of estrangement. A *psychology* for which this book, the most tangible and accessible part of history, is closed, can never become a *real* science with a genuine content. What indeed should we think of a science which *primly* abstracts from this large area of human labour, and fails to sense its own inadequacy, even though such an extended wealth of human activity says nothing more to it perhaps than what can be said in one word – 'need', 'common need'?

The *natural sciences* have been prolifically active and have gathered together an ever growing mass of material. But philosophy has remained just as alien to them as they have remained alien to philosophy. Their momentary union was only a *fantastic illusion*. The will was there, but not the means. Even historiography only incidentally takes account of natural science, which it sees as contributing to enlightenment, utility and a few great discoveries. But natural science

has intervened in and transformed human life all the more *practically* through industry and has prepared the conditions for human emancipation, however much its immediate effect was to complete the process of dehumanization. *Industry* is the *real* historical relationship of nature, and hence of natural science, to man. If it is then conceived as the *exoteric* revelation of man's *essential powers*, the *human* essence of nature or the *natural* essence of man can also be understood. Hence natural science will lose its abstractly material, or rather idealist, orientation and become the basis of *human* science, just as it has already become – though in an *estranged* form – the basis of actual human life. The idea of *one* basis for life and another for *science* is from the very outset a lie. Nature as it comes into being in human history – in the act of creation of human society – is the *true* nature of man; hence nature as it comes into being through industry, though in an *estranged* form, is true *anthropological* nature.

Sense perception (see Feuerbach) must be the basis of all science. Only when science starts out from sense perception in the dual form of *sensuous* consciousness and *sensuous* need – i.e. only when science starts out from nature – is it *real* science. The whole of history is a preparation, a development, for '*man*' to become the object of *sensuous* consciousness and for the needs of 'man as man' to become [sensuous] needs. History itself is a *real* part of *natural history* and of nature's becoming man. Natural science will in time subsume the science of man just as the science of man will subsume natural science: there will be *one* science.

Man is the immediate object of natural science; for immediate *sensuous nature* for man is, immediately, human sense perception (an identical expression) in the form of the *other* man who is present in his sensuous immediacy for him. His own sense perception only exists as human sense perception for himself through the *other* man. But *nature* is the immediate object of the *science of man*. Man's first object – man – is nature, sense perception; and the particular sensuous human powers, since they can find objective realization only in *natural* objects, can find self-knowledge only in the science of nature in general. The element of thought itself, the element of the vital expression of thought – *language* – is sensuous nature. The *social* reality of nature and *human* natural science or the *natural science of man* are identical expressions.

It can be seen how the *rich man* and the wealth of *human* need take the place of the *wealth* and *poverty* of political economy. The *rich* man is simultaneously the man *in need of* a totality of vital human expression; he is the man in whom his own realization exists as inner necessity, as *need*. Given socialism, not only man's *wealth* but also his *poverty* acquire a *human* and hence a social significance. Poverty is the passive bond which makes man experience his greatest wealth – the *other* man – as need. The domination of the objective essence within me, the sensuous outburst of my essential activity, is *passion*, which here becomes the *activity* of my being.

(5) A *being* sees himself as independent only when he stands on his own feet, and he only stands on his own feet when he owes his *existence* to himself. A man who lives by the grace of another regards himself as a dependent being. But I live completely by the grace of another if I owe him not only the maintenance of my life but also its *creation*, if he is the *source* of my life. My life is necessarily grounded outside itself if it is not my own creation. The *creation* is therefore an idea which is very hard to exorcize from the popular consciousness. This consciousness is *incapable of comprehending* the self-mediated being [*Durchsichselbstsein*] of nature and of man, since such a being contradicts all the *palpable evidence* of practical life.

The creation of the *earth* received a heavy blow from the science of *geogeny*, i.e. the science which depicts the formation of the earth, its coming to be, as a process of self-generation. *Generatio aequivoca*[8] is the only practical refutation of the theory of creation.

Now it is easy to say to a particular individual what Aristotle said: You were begotten by your father and your mother, which means that in you the mating of two human beings, a human species-act, produced another human being. Clearly, then, man also owes his existence

to man in a physical sense. Therefore you should not only keep sight of the *one* aspect, the *infinite* progression which leads you on to the question: 'Who begot my father, his grandfather, etc.?' You should also keep in mind the *circular movement* sensuously perceptible in that progression whereby man reproduces himself in the act of begetting and thus always remains the subject. But you will reply: I grant you this circular movement, but you must also grant me the right to progress back to the question: Who begot the first man, and nature in general? I can only answer: Your question is itself a product of abstraction. Ask yourself how you arrived at that question. Ask yourself whether your question does not arise from a standpoint to which I cannot reply because it is a perverse one. Ask yourself whether that progression exists as such for rational thought. If you ask about the creation of nature and of man, then you are abstracting from nature and from man. You assume them as *non-existent* and want me to prove to you that they *exist*. My answer is: Give up your abstraction and you will then give up your question. But if you want to hold on to your abstraction, then do so consistently, and if you assume the non-existence of man and nature, then assume also your own non-existence, for you are also nature and man. Do not think and do not ask me questions, for as soon as you think and ask questions, your *abstraction* from the existence of nature and man has no meaning. Or are you such an egoist that you assume everything as non-existent and still want to exist yourself?

You can reply: I do not want to assume the nothingness of nature, etc. I am only asking how it *arose*, just as I might ask the anatomist about the formation of bones, etc.

But since for socialist man the *whole of what is called world history* is nothing more than the creation of man through human labour, and the development of nature for man, he therefore has palpable and incontrovertible proof of his self-mediated *birth*, of his *process of emergence*. Since the *essentiality* [*Wesenhaftigkeit*] of man and of nature, man as the existence of nature for man and nature as the existence of man for man, has become practically and sensuously perceptible, the question of an *alien* being, a being above nature and man – a question which implies an admission of the unreality of nature and of man – has become impossible in practice. *Atheism*, which is a denial of this unreality, no longer has any meaning, for atheism is a *negation of God*, through which negation it asserts the *existence of man*. But socialism as such no longer needs such mediation. Its starting-point is the *theoretically and practically sensuous consciousness* of man and of nature as *essential beings*. It is the *positive self-consciousness* of man, no longer mediated through the abolition of religion, just as *real life* is positive reality no longer mediated through the abolition of private property, through *communism*. Communism is the act of positing as the negation of the negation, and is therefore a *real* phase, necessary for the next period of historical development, in the emancipation and recovery of mankind. *Communism* is the necessary form and the dynamic principle of the immediate future but communism is not as such the goal of human development – the form of human society.[9]

Translated by Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton

Notes

1 *Editor's note*: 'Private Property and Communism' is a fragment from the third of Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* and was written as an appendix to a page in the second manuscript, 'The Relationship of Private Property', much of which is missing. The fragment begins with these words. Unless stated otherwise, all subsequent notes are by the translators.

2 'Communism' in this sense is, of course, the 'crude communism' of utopian thinkers such as Fourier, Proudhon and Babeuf, and is later contrasted with Marx's own conception of communism.

3 Having discussed the nature of 'crude communism', Marx now goes on to describe his own conception of communism.

4 Prostitution is only a *particular* expression of the *universal* prostitution of the *worker*, and since prostitution is a relationship which includes not only the prostituted but also the prostitutor – whose infamy is even greater – the capitalist is also included in this category. [*This note was inserted by Marx at the bottom of his manuscript page without any further indication of reference.*]
5 It is therefore just as varied as the *determinations* of the *human essence* and *activities*. [*Marx's note.*]
6 Cf. Moses Hess, 'Philosophie der Tat', printed in *Einundzwanzig Bogen aus der Schweiz*, Erster Teil, Zurich, 1843, p. 329.
7 In practice I can only relate myself to a thing in a human way if the thing is related in a human way to man. [*Marx's note.*]
8 Spontaneous generation.
9 The meaning of this sentence is unclear. 'Communism … as such' is sometimes taken as referring to the 'crude communism' discussed earlier. On the other hand, the sentence can be interpreted as meaning that communism is not the final stage in the development of humanity, but will in its turn be transcended by a richer and higher stage.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Karl Marx in English

The German Ideology (1845–46), ed. C. Arthur, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970.
The Communist Manifesto (1848, with Friedrich Engels), ed. D. McLellan, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (1859), trans. M. Nicolaus, London: Penguin, 1993.
Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, vol. 1: The Process of Production of Capital (1867), trans. B. Fowkes, London: Penguin, 1990.
Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, vol. 2: The Process of Circulation of Capital (1867), trans. D. Fernbach, London: Penguin, 1992.
Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, vol. 3: The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole (1867), trans. D. Fernbach, London: Penguin, 1991.
Collected Works, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Moscow: Progress, 1996 and London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1996.
Early Writings, trans. R. Livingstone and G. Benton, London: Penguin, 1992.
Marx: Early Political Writings, ed. J.J. O'Malley, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
Marx: Later Political Writings, ed. T. Carver, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
Marx: Selected Writings, ed. D. McLellan, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
The Portable Karl Marx, ed. E. Kamenka, New York: Penguin, 1983.

Further reading

T. Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.
M.A. Lifshitz, *The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx*, trans. R.B. Winn, London: Pluto Press, 1973.
M.A. Rose, *Marx's Lost Aesthetic: Karl Marx and the Visual Arts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
A. Sanchez Vazquez, *Art and Society: Essays in Marxist Aesthetics*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974.

Chapter 13

THEODOR W. ADORNO

INTRODUCTION

Through the content and style of his writing, the German philosopher and musicologist Theodor W. Adorno (1903–69) works against the limitations of identity thinking – thinking in terms of concepts 'consuming' objects – in order to bring new conceptual possibilities to light. The Marxist, materialist conception of history asserts that thought and culture are inextricably linked. The objects and structures which populate our lives cannot be disassociated from the concepts and structures we use to think. Western, Enlightenment thought, Adorno claims, is governed by the binary, epistemological model of the knowing subject and the object he perceives. Knowledge, on this account, is idealized as the subject consuming, mastering, or identifying himself with the object; in other words, the subject arranging his categories so that they 'capture' the object. This is manifest in the commodity fetishism of capitalism whereby we equate ourselves with the items we buy; objects acquire an allure and an independence of their own, removed from the labour behind them, which have to be possessed.

Art, however, for Adorno, offers social and conceptual emancipation. It is, he claims, 'autonomous'. Although rooted in a particular cultural context, art nevertheless generates its own novel structures of meaning, independent of any worldly content. He cites music as the purest art because it does not refer directly to the world; all other art forms, e.g. literature, painting, film, are burdened by their representational value (see 'In nuce' on page 249). Through creating meaning and value which exceed its material origins, art challenges dominant structures of understanding. Art's capacity to generate new meaning is a version of the old philosophical problem, first considered by Plato in the *Meno*, of how new ideas can arise from old. (Plato argues that new ideas are recollections of direct experience of the Forms from a previous existence. Marcuse alludes to the theory in 'Nature and Revolution' below.) It appears here in the form set by Hegel and Marx, whereby human involvement in reality, either through perception or labour, allows the world to throw back a new conceptual or humanized appearance.

Adorno's writing is performative. His philosophical position is articulated not just through *what he says* but also through *how he says it*. If philosophy is to generate new, emancipatory concepts and avoid the contradictions of binary thinking, Adorno reasons, then it must become more like art. He draws his inspiration from music. Adorno studied composition under Alban Berg in Vienna between 1925 and 1927 and was especially sympathetic to the atonality of Arnold Schönberg's 'new music'. Whereas traditional, diatonic music is consonant with abstraction, summary, and ease of recognition, 'new' atonality draws attention to the structure of a composition as a series of decisions whose outcomes cannot be universalized. It is the same irreducibility to a concept which motivates Adorno's philosophy. His dense, tortuous prose, and

the lack of unity or orientation which results, are intended to resist the transparency and ease of consumption of linear, continuous, recapitulative argument. His style might be described as 'constellational', following the 'constellation' metaphor he uses to explicate his epistemology in *Negative Dialectics*. Understanding occurs not through a unified hierarchy of concepts, he argues, but through the constellational proximities and distances which exist between terms and which will always, ultimately, frustrate classification.[1] Parataxis is his preferred form of composition: clauses placed one after the other with little or no indication of the thesis or argument which might bind them together. Some key works, such as *Minima Moralia* (1951), *Negative Dialectics* (1966), and *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), are made up entirely of aphorisms: individual excursions, each a couple or so pages long, which, on the one hand, give the impression of being self-contained and independent but, on the other, knit together to form an irreducible network of conceptual counterpoint and cross-referral. The texture of the interaction which takes place between ideas, the conceptual friction that is generated, and the possibility of new insights being thrown back are the objects of Adorno's philosophical aesthetics. His writing is philosophy made into art or a philosophy *of* art, where the 'of' is not placing the philosopher at a distance but making his thought itself 'of art'.

Contradiction in any discussion is a significant outcome, Adorno avers, because it shows how the attempt to step outside a way of thinking only reinvokes the very concepts one is hoping to exceed. The fact that contradiction arises, and not, as with Hegel, the dominion of the concept over the object, is taken by Adorno as evidence of the historical and material rootedness of thought, an affirmation of its contingency and necessary undetachability from the particular. Several examples of this kind of analysis appear below in the extracts from *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*. The book interweaves meditations on the experience of exile with some of the most concise, lucid, though nonetheless demanding, formulations of arguments that are central to Adorno's entire *oeuvre*. Taste, he writes in 'Damper and drum', 'is the most accurate seismograph of historical experience' because, throughout history, it is always 'reacting against itself'. The sharp edges of the will to shock have been machined by antecedent aesthetic conventions. It is 'the fine filigree of his late bourgeois organization' that allows the individual to rebel against 'the fine filigree of late bourgeois organization'. However, without this supersessive retention of an order, he warns us, the possibility of subjective expression in art would be cancelled out by the 'matter of factness' of cinematic representation. Every artwork contains the contradiction which is at the heart of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*: the concept of purposiveness without a purpose. As Adorno writes in 'Art object': 'the very glorification of the artefact is itself inseparable from the rational purposefulness from which art seeks to break away'. The purpose of art, he suggests, is to 'push this contradiction to the extreme' and to realize itself in its 'resultant downfall'. But by Adorno's own lights, this will not be an eternal descent.

Note

1 T.W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton, London: Routledge, 1973, p. 162.

■ ■ ■

EXTRACTS FROM *MINIMA MORALIA*

THEODOR W. ADORNO

91 Vandals

The haste, nervousness, restlessness observed since the rise of the big cities is now spreading in the manner of an epidemic, as did once the plague and cholera. In the process forces are being unleashed that were undreamed of by the scurrying passer-by of the nineteenth century. Everybody must have projects all the time. The maximum must be extracted from leisure. This is planned, used for undertakings, crammed with visits to every conceivable site or spectacle, or just with the fastest possible locomotion. The shadow of all this falls on intellectual work. It is done with a bad conscience, as if it had been poached from some urgent, even if only imaginary occupation. To justify itself in its own eyes it puts on a show of hectic activity performed under great pressure and shortage of time, which excludes all reflection, and therefore itself. It often seems as if intellectuals reserved for their actual production only those hours left over from obligations, excursions, appointments and unavoidable amusements. There is something repulsive, yet to a certain degree rational, about the prestige gained by those who can present themselves as such important people that they have to be on the spot everywhere. They stylize their lives with intentionally ham-acted discontent as a single *acte de présence*. The pleasure with which they turn down an invitation by reference to another previously accepted, signals a triumph between competitors. As here, so generally, the forms of the production process are repeated in private life, or in those areas of work exempted from these forms themselves. The whole of life must look like a job, and by this resemblance conceal what is not yet directly devoted to pecuniary gain. But the fear thus expressed only reflects a much deeper one. The unconscious innervations which, beyond thought processes, attune individual existence to historical rhythms, sense the approaching collectivization of the world. Yet since integral society does not so much take up individuals positively within itself as crush them to an amorphous and malleable mass, each individual dreads the process of absorption, which is felt as inevitable. Doing things and going places is an attempt by the sensorium to set up a kind of counter-irritant against a threatening collectivization, to get in training for it by using the hours apparently left to freedom to coach oneself as a member of the mass. The technique is to try to outdo the danger. One lives in a sense even worse, that is, with even less self, than one expects to have to live. At the same time one learns through this playful excess of self-loss that to live in earnest without a self could be easier, not more difficult. All this is done in great haste, for no warning bells will announce the earthquake. If one does not take part, and that means, if one does not swim bodily in the human stream, one fears, as when delaying too long to join a totalitarian party, missing the bus and bringing on oneself the vengeance of the collective. Pseudo-activity is an insurance, the expression of a readiness for self-surrender, in which one senses the only guarantee of self-preservation. Security is glimpsed in adaptation to the utmost insecurity. It is seen as a licence for flight that will take one somewhere else with the utmost speed. In the fanatical love of cars the feeling of physical homelessness plays a part. It is at the bottom of what the bourgeois were wont to call, mistakenly, the flight from oneself, from the inner void. Anyone who wants to move with the times is not allowed to be different. Psychological emptiness is itself only the result of the wrong kind of social absorption. The boredom that people are running away from merely mirrors the process of running away, that started long before. For this reason alone the monstrous machinery of amusement keeps alive and constantly grows bigger without a single person being amused by it. It channels the urge to be in on the act, which otherwise,

indiscriminately, anarchically, as promiscuity or wild aggression, would throw itself on the collective, itself consisting of none other than those on the move. Most closely related to them are addicts. Their impulse reacts exactly to the dislocation of mankind that has led from the murky blurring of the difference between town and country, the abolition of the house, via the processions of millions of unemployed, to the deportations and uprooting of peoples on the devastated European continent. The nullity and lack of content of all collective rituals since the Youth Movement emerges retrospectively as a groping anticipation of stunning historical blows. The countless people who suddenly succumb to their own quantity and mobility, to the swarming getaway as to a drug, are recruits to the migration of nations, in whose desolated territories bourgeois history is preparing to meet its end.

92 Picture-book without pictures[1]

The objective tendency of the Enlightenment, to wipe out the power of images over man, is not matched by any subjective progress on the part of enlightened thinking towards freedom from images. While the assault on images irresistibly demolishes, after metaphysical Ideas, those concepts once understood as rational and genuinely attained by thought, the thinking unleashed by the Enlightenment and immunized against thinking is now becoming a second figurativeness, thought without images or spontaneity. Amid the network of now wholly abstract relations of people to each other and to things, the power of abstraction is vanishing. The estrangement of schemata and classifications from the data subsumed beneath them, indeed the sheer quantity of the material processed, which has become quite incommensurable with the horizons of individual experience, ceaselessly enforces an archaic retranslation into sensuous signs. The little silhouettes of men or houses that pervade statistics like hieroglyphics may appear in each particular case accidental, mere auxiliary means. But it is not by chance that they have such a resemblance to countless advertisements, newspaper stereotypes, toys. In them representation triumphs over what is represented. Their outsize, simplistic and therefore false comprehensibility corroborates the incomprehensibility of the intellectual processes themselves, from which their falseness – their blind, unthinking subsumption – is inseparable. The omnipresent images are none, because they present the wholly general, the average, the standard model, as something unique or special, and so deride it. The abolition of the particular is turned insidiously into something particular. The desire for particularity has silted up while still at the stage of a need, and is reproduced on all sides by mass-culture, on the pattern of the comic strip. What was once called intellect is superseded by illustrations. It is not only that people are no longer able to imagine what is not shown and drilled into them in abbreviated form. Even the joke, in which once the freedom of the mind collided with the facts and exploded them, has gone over to illustration. The pictorial jokes filling magazines are for the most part pointless, devoid of meaning. They consist of nothing beyond a challenge to the eye to compete with the situation. One is supposed, schooled by countless precedents, to see what is 'going on' more quickly than the moments of significance in the situation can unfold. What is acted out by such pictures and then re-enacted by the well-versed onlooker, in the instantaneous sizing-up of the situation, the unresisting submission to the empty predominance of things, is the jettisoning of all meaning like ballast. The joke of our time is the suicide of intention. He who 'cracks' it is rewarded by admission to the collective of laughers, who have cruel things on their side. If one strove to understand such jokes by thinking, one would fall helplessly behind the runaway tempo of things, which tear along even in the simplest caricature as in the mad race at the end of a film cartoon. Cleverness turns straight into stupidity in face of regressive progress. The only comprehension left to thought is horror at the incomprehensible. Just as the reflective onlooker, meeting the

laughing placard of a toothpaste beauty, discerns in her flashlight grin the grimace of torture, so from every joke, even from every pictorial representation, he is assailed by the death sentence on the subject, which is implicit in the universal triumph of subjective reason.

93 Intention and reproduction

The pseudo-realism of the culture industry, its style, is in no need of fraudulent fabrication by film-magnates and their lackeys, but is dictated, under the prevailing conditions of production, by the stylistic principles of naturalism itself. If the film were to give itself up to the blind representation of everyday life, following the precepts of, say, Zola, as would indeed be practicable with moving photography and sound-recording, the result would be a construction alien to the visual habits of the audience, diffuse, unarticulated outwards. Radical naturalism, to which the technique of film lends itself, would dissolve all surface coherence of meaning and finish up as the antithesis of familiar realism. The film would turn into an associative stream of images, deriving its form from their pure, immanent construction. Yet if, for commercial reasons, or even with some disinterested intention, it strives to choose words and gestures in a way that relates them to an idea conferring meaning, this perhaps inevitable attempt finds itself in equally inevitable contradiction with the presupposition of naturalism. The less dense reproduction of reality in naturalist literature left room for intentions: in the unbroken duplication achieved by the technical apparatus of film every intention, even that of truth, becomes a lie. The word that is intended to impress on the audience the character of the speaker or even the meaning of the whole, sounds, compared to the literal fidelity of its reproduction, 'unnatural'. It justifies the world as having been itself similarly meaningful, before the first deliberate fraud, the first real distortion was committed. No-one talks, no-one moves like this, whereas the film unceasingly urges that everyone does. One is trapped: conformism is produced a priori by meaning in itself, no matter what the concrete meaning may be, while it is only by meaning something that conformism, the respectful reiteration of the factual, could be shaken. True intentions would only be possible by renouncing intention. That this and realism are incompatible, that synthesis becomes a lie, stems from the concept of significance. It is ambiguous. It refers without distinction to the organization of the subject matter as such and to its communication to the audience. This ambiguity is, however, no accident. Significance designates the point of equilibrium between reason and communication. It is both right, in that the objective figure, the realized expression, turns outward from itself and speaks, and wrong, in that the figure is corrupted by counting in the interlocutor. Every artistic and even theoretical work must show itself able to meet the danger of such ambiguity. Significant form, however esoteric, makes concessions to consumption; lack of significance is dilettantism by its immanent criteria. Quality is decided by the depth at which the work incorporates the alternatives within itself, and so masters them.

94 All the world's not a stage

The coming extinction of art is prefigured in the increasing impossibility of representing historical events. That there is no adequate drama about Fascism is not due to lack of talent; talent is withering through the insolubility of the writer's most urgent task. He has to choose between two principles, both equally inappropriate to the subject: psychology and infantilism. The former, now aesthetically obsolete, has been used by significant artists only as a trick and with a bad conscience, since modern drama came to see its object in politics. In his preface to *Fiesco* Schiller argues: 'If it is true that only emotion arouses emotion, the political hero must, it seems to me, be an unsuitable subject for the stage to the same extent that he is obliged

to neglect the man in order to be the political hero. It was not my intention to give my plot the living glow which is the pure product of enthusiasm, but to spin the cold, sterile drama of state from the human heart, and so to connect it again to the human heart – to involve the man through his statesman's intelligence – and to draw human situations from an ingenious intrigue – that was my intention. Also, my relation to the ordinary world made me more familiar with the heart than with the council-chamber, and perhaps this very political weakness has become a poetic strength.' Perhaps not. The connection of alienated history to the human heart was already in Schiller's case a pretext for justifying the inhumanity of history as humanly comprehensible, and was given the lie whenever his technique equated the 'man' and the 'statesman's intelligence', as in the burlesque and fortuitous murder of Leonore by the betrayer of his own conspiracy. The tendency towards aesthetic re-privatization pulls the ground from under art in its attempt to conserve humanism. The cabals of Schiller's too-well constructed plays are impotent auxiliary constructions straddling the passions of the characters and a social and political reality already incommensurable with them, no longer comprehensible in terms of human motivations. Recently this has taken the form of a trashy biographical literature eager to bring the famous humanly closer to the humble reader. The same urge towards false humanization underlies the calculated re-introduction of plot, of action as a coherent meaning harmoniously performed. On the presuppositions of photographic realism this would not be tenable in film. In arbitrarily reinstating it, the cinema has disregarded the experience of the great novels on which it parasitically lives; they derived their meaning precisely from the dissolution of coherent meaning.

To clear all this aside, however, and to seek to portray the political scene as abstract and extra-human, excluding the deceptive mediations of the psychological, is to do no better. For it is just the essential abstractness of what really happens which rebuts the aesthetic image. To make this abstractness expressible at all, the writer is forced to translate it into a kind of children's language, into archetypes, and so a second time to 'bring it home', no longer to the emotions but to those check-points in comprehension which precede even the constitution of language, and cannot be sidestepped even by epic theatre. The appeal to these authorities is in itself a formal sanction of the subject's dissolution in collective society. The object, however, is scarcely less falsified by such translation than would be a religious war by its deduction from the erotic needs of a queen. For as infantile as today's simplistic drama are the very people whose portrayal it abjures. Yet the political economy that it takes upon itself to portray instead, if it remains in principle unchanged, in each of its moments is so differentiated and advanced, as to exclude schematic parables. To present processes within large-scale industry as transactions between crooked vegetable dealers suffices for a momentary shock-effect, but not for dialectical theatre. The illustration of late capitalism by images from the agrarian or criminal registers does not permit the monstrosity of modern society to emerge in full clarity from the complex phenomena masking it. Rather, the unconcern for the phenomena, which ought themselves to be derived visibly from their essence, distorts the essence. It harmlessly interprets the seizure of power on the highest level as the machination of rackets outside society, not as the coming-to-itself of society as such.[2] The impossibility of portraying Fascism springs from the fact that in it, as in its contemplation, subjective freedom no longer exists. Total unfreedom can be recognized, but not represented. Where freedom occurs as a motif in political narratives today, as in the praise of heroic resistance, it has the embarrassing quality of impotent reassurance. The outcome always appears decided in advance by high politics, and freedom is manifested only ideologically, as talk about freedom, in stereotyped declamations, not in humanly commensurable actions. Art is least to be saved by stuffing the extinct subject like a museum piece, and the object, the purely inhuman, which alone is worthy of art today, escapes its reach at once by excess and inhumanity.

95 Damper and drum

Taste is the most accurate seismograph of historical experience. Unlike almost all other faculties, it is even able to register its own behaviour. Reacting against itself, it recognizes its own lack of taste. Artists who repel or shock, spokesmen of unbridled cruelty, are governed, in their idiosyncrasy, by taste; the cultivation of a fine sensibility, the domain of nervous neo-romantics, is as patently coarse and unfeeling, even to its protagonists, as is Rilke's line: 'For poverty's a great glow from within …' The delicate shudder, the pathos of being different, are now no more than stock masks in the cult of oppression. It is precisely the nerves most highly-developed aesthetically that now find self-righteous aestheticism intolerable. The individual is so thoroughly historical that he is able, with the fine filigree of his late bourgeois organization, to rebel against the fine filigree of late bourgeois organization. In repugnance for all artistic subjectivism, for expression and exaltation, the flesh creeps at the lack of historical tact, just as subjectivity itself earlier flinched from bourgeois conventions. Even the rejection of mimesis, the deepest concern of the new matter-of-factness in art, is mimetic. Judgement on subjective expression is not passed from outside, in political and social reflection, but within immediate impulses, every one of which, shamed in face of the culture industry, averts its eyes from its mirror image. Heading the list is the proscription of erotic pathos, evinced no less by the shift of lyrical accents than by the collective ban on sexuality in Kafka's works. In art since Expressionism the prostitute has become a key figure, though in reality she is dying out, since it is only by portrayal of figures devoid of shame that sex can now be handled without aesthetic embarrassment. Such displacements in the deepest levels of our reaction have brought about the decay of art in its individualistic form, without a collective form being possible. It is beyond the faith and independence of the individual artist to hold unwaveringly to the expressive sphere and to oppose the brutal compulsion of collectivization; rather he must feel this compulsion, even against his will, in the most secret cells of his isolation, if he is not, through anachronistic humanity, to fall untruthfully and helplessly behind the inhuman. Even intransigent literary Expressionism, Stramm's poetry, Kokoschka's dramas,[3] show as the reverse-side of their genuine radicalism a naive aspect of liberal trustfulness. Progress beyond them, however, is no less questionable. Works of art which attempt consciously to eliminate innocuous absolute subjectivity, raise in so doing the demand for a positive community, not present in themselves, but which they arbitrarily quote. This merely makes them mouthpieces of doom and victims of an ultimate naivety which cancels them out: that of still being art at all. The aporia of responsible work benefits the irresponsible. Should it once prove possible to do away with nerves entirely, then no herbicide will avail against the renascent springtime of song, and the national front extending all the way from barbaric Futurism to the ideology of the cinema, will go entirely unopposed.

96 Palace of Janus

If one gave way to a need to place the system of the culture industry in a wide, world-historical perspective, it would have to be defined as the systematic exploitation of the ancient fissure between men and their culture. The dual nature of progress, which always developed the potential of freedom simultaneously with the reality of oppression, gave rise to a situation where peoples were more and more inducted into the control of nature and social organization, but grew at the same time, owing to the compulsion under which culture placed them, incapable of understanding in what way culture went beyond such integration. What has become alien to men is the human component of culture, its closest part, which upholds them against the world. They make common cause with the world against themselves, and the most alienated condition of all, the omnipresence of commodities, their own conversion into appendages of machinery, is for them a mirage of closeness. The great works of art and philosophical constructions have remained uncomprehended

not through their too great distance from the heart of human experience, but the opposite; and this incomprehension could itself be accounted for easily enough by too great comprehension: shame at involvement in universal injustice that would become overwhelming as soon as one allowed oneself to understand. Instead, people cling to what mocks them in confirming the mutilation of their essence by the smoothness of its own appearance. On such inevitable delusions lackeys of the existing order have in all phases of urban civilization parasitically dwelt: later Attic comedy, Hellenistic arts and crafts, are already kitsch, even though they have not yet at their disposal the technique of mechanical reproduction and that industrial apparatus whose archetype the ruins of Pompeii readily conjure up. Reading popular novels a hundred years old like those of Cooper, one finds in rudimentary form the whole pattern of Hollywood. The stagnation of the culture industry is probably not the result of monopolization, but was a property of so-called entertainment from the first. Kitsch is composed of that structure of invariables which the philosophical lie ascribes to its solemn designs. On principle, nothing in them must change, since the whole mischief is intended to hammer into men that nothing must change. But as long as civilization followed its course randomly and anonymously, the objective spirit was not aware of this barbaric element as a necessary part of itself. Under the illusion of directly helping freedom, when it was mediating domination, it at least disdained to assist in directly reproducing the latter. It proscribed kitsch, that followed it like a shadow, with a fervour certainly itself expressive of the bad conscience of high culture, half aware that under domination it ceases to be culture, and reminded by kitsch of its own degradation. Today, when the consciousness of rulers is beginning to coincide with the overall tendency of society, the tension between culture and kitsch is breaking down. Culture no longer impotently drags its despised opponent behind it, but is taking it under its direction. In administering the whole of mankind, it administers also the breach between man and culture. Even the coarseness, insensitivity and narrowness objectively imposed on the oppressed, are manipulated with subjective mastery in humour. Nothing more exactly characterizes the condition of being at once integral and antagonistic than this incorporation of barbarity. Here, however, the will of the controllers can invoke that of the world. Their mass society did not first produce the trash for the customers, but the customers themselves. It is they who hungered for films, radio and magazines; whatever remained unsatisfied in them through the order which takes from them without giving in exchange what it promises, only burned with impatience for their gaoler to remember them, and at last offer them stones in his left hand for the hunger from which he withholds bread in his right. Unresistingly, for a quarter of a century, elderly citizens, who should have known of something different, have been falling into the arms of the culture industry which so accurately calculates their famished hearts. They have no cause to take umbrage at a youth corrupted to the marrow by Fascism. This subjectless, culturally disinherited generation are the true heirs of culture.

97 Monad

The individual owes his crystallization to the forms of political economy, particularly to those of the urban market. Even as the opponent of the pressure of socialization he remains the latter's most particular product and its likeness. What enables him to resist, that streak of independence in him, springs from monadological individual interest and its precipitate, character. The individual mirrors in his individuation the pre-ordained social laws of exploitation, however mediated. This means too, however, that his decay in the present phase must itself not be deduced individualistically, but from the social tendency which asserts itself by means of individuation and not merely as its enemy. On this point reactionary cultural criticism diverges from the other kind. Reactionary criticism often enough attains insight into the decay of individuality and the crisis of society, but places the ontological responsibility for this on the individual as such,

as something discrete and internal: for this reason the accusation of shallowness, lack of faith and substance, is the last word it has to say, and return to the past its solace. Individualists like Huxley and Jaspers damn the individual for his mechanical emptiness and neurotic weakness, but the trend of their condemnation is rather to sacrifice the individual himself than to criticize the social *principium individuationis*. As half-truths their polemics are already the whole untruth. Society is seen by them as an unmediated community of men, from whose attitudes the whole follows, instead of as a system not only encompassing and deforming them, but even reaching down into that humanity which once conditioned them as individuals. By this exclusively human interpretation of the situation as it is, the crude material reality that binds human beings to inhumanity is accepted even while being accused. In its better days, when it reflected historically, the bourgeoisie was well aware of such interconnections, and it is only since its doctrine has degenerated to obtuse apologetics against socialism that it has forgotten them. It is not the least merit of Jakob Burckhardt's history of Greek civilization to have connected the drying-up of Hellenistic individuality not only with the objective decline of the polis, but precisely with the cult of the individual: 'But following the deaths of Demosthenes and Phocion, the city is surprisingly depleted of political personalities, and not only of them: Epicurus, born as early as 342 of an Attic cleruch family on Samos, is the last Athenian of any kind to have world-historical importance.' The situation in which the individual was vanishing was at the same time one of unbridled individualism, where 'all was possible': 'Above all, individuals are now worshipped instead of gods.'[4] That the setting-free of the individual by the undermining of the *polis* did not strengthen his resistance, but eliminated him and individuality itself, in the consummation of dictatorial states, provides a model of one of the central contradictions which drove society from the nineteenth century to Fascism. Beethoven's music, which works within the forms transmitted by society and is ascetic towards the expression of private feelings, resounds with the guided echo of social conflict, drawing precisely from this asceticism the whole fullness and power of individuality. That of Richard Strauss, wholly at the service of individual claims and dedicated to the glorification of the self-sufficient individual, thereby reduces the latter to a mere receptive organ of the market, an imitator of arbitrarily chosen ideas and styles. Within repressive society the individual's emancipation not only benefits but damages him. Freedom from society robs him of the strength for freedom. For however real he may be in his relations to others, he is, considered absolutely, a mere abstraction. He has no content that is not socially constituted, no impulse transcending society that is not directed at assisting the social situation to transcend itself. Even the Christian doctrine of death and immortality, in which the notion of absolute individuality is rooted, would be wholly void if it did not embrace humanity. The single man who hoped for immortality absolutely and for himself alone, would in such limitation only inflate to preposterous dimensions the principle of self-preservation which the injunction that 'He that loses his life, shall save it' holds in check. Socially, the absolute status granted to the individual marks the transition from the universal mediation of social relation – a mediation which, as exchange, always also requires curtailment of the particular interests realized through it – to direct domination, where power is seized by the strongest. Through this dissolution of all the mediating elements within the individual himself, by virtue of which he was, in spite of everything, also a part of a social subject, he regresses, impoverished and coarsened, to the state of a mere social object. As something abstractly realized, in Hegel's sense, the individual cancels himself out: the countless people who know nothing but their naked, prowling interest are those who capitulate the moment organization and terror overtake them. If today the trace of humanity seems to persist only in the individual in his decline, it admonishes us to make an end of the fatality which individualizes men, only to break them completely in their isolation. The saving principle is now preserved in its antithesis alone.

98 Bequest

Dialectical thought is an attempt to break through the coercion of logic by its own means. But since it must use these means, it is at every moment in danger of itself acquiring a coercive character: the ruse of reason would like to hold sway over the dialectic too. The existing cannot be overstepped except by means of a universal derived from the existing order itself. The universal triumphs over the existing through the latter's own concept, and therefore, in its triumph, the power of mere existence constantly threatens to reassert itself by the same violence that broke it. Through the absolute rule of negation, the movement of thought as of history becomes, in accordance with the pattern of immanent antithesis, unambiguously, exclusively, implacably positive. Everything is subsumed under the principal economic phases and their development, which each in turn historically shape the whole of society; thought in its entirety has something of what Parisian artists call *le genre chef d'œuvre*. That calamity is brought about precisely by the stringency of such development; that this stringency is itself linked to domination, is, at the least, not made explicit in critical theory, which, like traditional theory, awaits salvation from stage-by-stage progression. Stringency and totality, the bourgeois intellectual ideals of necessity and generality, do indeed circumscribe the formula of history, but for just this reason the constitution of society finds its precipitate in those great, immovable, lordly concepts against which dialectical criticism and practice are directed. If Benjamin said that history had hitherto been written from the standpoint of the victor, and needed to be written from that of the vanquished,[5] we might add that knowledge must indeed present the fatally rectilinear succession of victory and defeat, but should also address itself to those things which were not embraced by this dynamic, which fell by the wayside – what might be called the waste products and blind spots that have escaped the dialectic. It is in the nature of the defeated to appear, in their impotence, irrelevant, eccentric, derisory. What transcends the ruling society is not only the potentiality it develops but also all that which did not fit properly into the laws of historical movement. Theory must needs deal with cross-grained, opaque, unassimilated material, which as such admittedly has from the start an anachronistic quality, but is not wholly obsolete since it has outwitted the historical dynamic. This can most readily be seen in art. Children's books like *Alice in Wonderland* or *Struwwelpeter*, of which it would be absurd to ask whether they are progressive or reactionary, contain incomparably more eloquent ciphers even of history than the high drama of Hebbel, concerned though it is with the official themes of tragic guilt, turning points of history, the course of the world and the individual, and in Satie's pert and puerile piano pieces there are flashes of experience undreamed of by the school of Schönberg, with all its rigour and all the pathos of musical development behind it. The very grandeur of logical deductions may inadvertently take on a provincial quality. Benjamin's writings are an attempt in ever new ways to make philosophically fruitful what has not yet been foreclosed by great intentions. The task he bequeathed was not to abandon such an attempt to the estranging enigmas of thought alone, but to bring the intentionless within the realm of concepts: the obligation to think at the same time dialectically and undialectically.

* * *

135 Sacrificial lamb

Dictating is not only more comfortable, more conducive to concentration, it has an additional substantive benefit. Dictation makes it possible for the writer, in the earliest phases of production, to manœuvre himself into the position of critic. What he sets down is tentative, provisional, mere material for revision, yet appears to him, once transcribed, as something estranged and in some measure objective. He need have no fear of committing something inadequate to paper,

for he is not the one who has to write it: he outwits responsibility in its interests. The risk of formulation takes the innocuous form first of the casually delivered memorandum and then of work on something already existing, so that he no longer properly perceives his own audacity. In face of the difficulty, now grown to desperate proportions, of every theoretical utterance, such tricks become a blessing. They are technical aids to the dialectical procedure which makes statements in order to withdraw them and yet to hold them fast. But thanks are due to the person taking down the dictation, if at the right moment he pulls up the writer by contradiction, irony, nervosity, impatience and disrespect. He incurs wrath, so diverting it from the store of bad conscience with which otherwise the writer would mistrust his own work and therefore dig in his heels all the more defiantly over his supposedly sacred text. The emotion that turns ungratefully on his troublesome helper, benignly purifies his relation to his subject.

136 Exhibitionist

Artists do not sublimate. That they neither satisfy nor repress their desires, but transform them into socially desirable achievements, their works, is a psycho-analytical illusion; incidentally, legitimate works of art are today without exception socially undesired. Rather, artists display violent instincts, free-floating and yet colliding with reality, marked by neurosis. Even the philistine's dream of the actor or violinist as the synthesis of a bundle of nerves and a tugger of heart-strings, has more truth than the no less philistine economic theory of instincts according to which the favourite children of renunciation get rid of the stuff in symphonies and novels. Their lot is rather a hysterically excessive lack of inhibition over every conceivable fear; narcissism taken to its paranoiac limit. To anything sublimated they oppose idiosyncrasies. They are implacable towards aesthetes, indifferent to a carefully-tended environment, and in tastefully-conducted lives they recognize diminished reactions against pressures to diminution as surely as do the psychologists, by whom they are themselves misunderstood. From Mozart's letters to his little Augsburg cousin to the jibes of the embittered private tutor, they have been attracted by the coarse, the inane, the indecent. They do not fit into Freudian theory because it lacks an adequate concept of expression, despite all its insight into the workings of symbolism in dream and neuroses. That an instinctual impulse expressed uncensored cannot be called repressed even though it no longer wishes to reach the goal it cannot find, is no doubt obvious. On the other hand, the analytic distinction between motor – 'real' – and hallucinatory satisfaction is an extension of that between satisfaction and undisguised expression. But expression is not hallucination. It is appearance, measured by the reality principle that it wishes to circumvent. Never, however, does subjective material attempt through appearance, as it does through the symptom, to substitute itself delusively for reality. Expression negates reality by holding up to it what is unlike it, but it never denies reality; it looks straight in the eye the conflict that results blindly in the symptom. What expression has in common with repression is that its movement is blocked by reality. That movement, and the whole complex of experience of which it is a part, is denied direct communication with its object. As expression it achieves unfalsified manifestation of itself and so of the resistance to it, in sensuous imitation. It is so strong that it suffers modification to a mere image, the price of survival, without mutilation on its outward path. In place of the goal, and of subjective, censorial 'elaboration', it sets an objective, polemical self-revelation. This distinguishes it from sublimation: each successful expression of the subject, one might say, is a small victory over the play of forces in its own psychology. The pathos of art is bound up with the fact that precisely by withdrawing into imagination it renders the superior power of reality its due, and yet does not resign itself to adaptation, does not prolong external violence in internal deformation. Those who accomplish this, have without exception to pay dearly for it as individuals, left helplessly behind by their expression, which has outstripped their psychology.

Thereby, however, they no less than their products instil doubts as to the ranking of art-works as cultural achievements by definition. No work of art, within the organization of society, can escape its involvement in culture, but there is none, if it is more than mere handicraft, which does not make culture a dismissive gesture: that of having become a work of art. Art is as inimical to 'art' as are artists. In renouncing the goal of instinct they remain faithful to it, and unmask the socially desirable activity naively glorified by Freud as sublimation – which probably does not exist.

137 Small sorrows, great songs[6]

Contemporary mass-culture is historically necessary not merely as a result of the encompassment of life in its totality by monster enterprises, but as a consequence of what seems most utterly opposed to the standardization of consciousness predominant today, aesthetic subjectivism. True, the more artists have journeyed into the interior, the more they have learned to forgo the infantile fun of imitating external reality. But at the same time, by dint of reflecting on the psyche, they have found out more and more how to control themselves. The progress in technique that brought them ever greater freedom and independence of anything heterogeneous, has resulted in a kind of reification, technification of the inward as such. The more masterfully the artist expresses himself, the less he has to 'be' what he expresses, and the more what he expresses, indeed the content of subjectivity itself, becomes a mere function of the production process. Nietzsche had an inkling of this when he taxed Wagner, that tamer of expression, with hypocrisy, without perceiving that this was not a matter of psychology but of a historical tendency. The transformation of expressive content from an undirected impulse into material for manipulation makes it palpable, exhibitable, saleable. The lyrical subjectivism of Heine, for example, does not stand in simple contradiction to his commercial traits; the saleable is itself subjectivity administrated by subjectivity. The virtuoso use of the 'scale' characteristic of nineteenth-century performers is transformed by an internal impulsion, without any need for betrayal, into journalism, spectacle, calculation. The law of motion of art, which amounts to the control and therefore the objectification of the subject by itself, means its downfall: the hostility to art of film, which passes in administrative review all materials and emotions in order to sell them most effectively to the public, the second stage of externality, has its source in art, in the growing domination over inner nature. The much-lauded play-acting of modern artists, their exhibitionism, is the gesture whereby they put themselves as goods on the market.

138 Who is who

The artist's or scholar's flattering conviction of his own naivety and purity is prolonged in his propensity to explain difficulties by the devious interests, the practical, calculating mentality of those who contract his services. But just as every construction that acquits oneself and convicts the world, all insistence on one's own qualifications, tends precisely to acquit the world in oneself, so the same holds good for the antithesis of pure intentions and cunning. Premeditating, guided by a thousand political and tactical considerations, cautious and suspicious – just such is the attitude adopted today by the intellectual outsider who knows what to expect. The insiders, however, whose realm has long since coalesced across party frontiers into 'living-space', no longer need the calculation ascribed to them. They are so dependably committed to the rules of reason's game, their interests have so unquestionably sedimented in their thinking, that they have again become ingenuous. In seeking out their dark designs, one's judgement is indeed metaphysically true, in that they are akin to the sombre course of the world, but psychologically false: one succumbs to the objective increase of persecution-mania. They who, through their

function, commit base and treacherous acts, who sell themselves and their friends to power, need no cunning or *arrière-pensée*, no plans elaborated by the ego, rather they need only give way to their own reactions, unthinkingly satisfy the demands of the moment, to perform effortlessly what others could achieve only by unfathomable scheming. They inspire trust just by proclaiming it. They see their own advantage, live from hand to mouth and commend themselves as both unegoistic and subscribers to a state of things which can be relied on to let them go short of nothing. Because all pursue without conflict solely their own particular interests, these appear in turn as universal and, in this way, disinterested. Their gestures are candid, spontaneous, disarming. They are nice and their opponents unpleasant. Since they no longer have the independence to perform an act in opposition to their interests, they rely on the goodwill of others, and themselves radiate it. Abstract interest, being wholly mediated, creates a second immediacy, while the man not yet wholly encompassed compromises himself as unnatural. If he is not to come to grief he must ceremoniously outdo the world in worldliness and is easily convicted of his maladroit excess. Suspicion, power-greed, lack of comradeship, deceit, vanity and inconsistency are a compelling reproach to him. Social witchcraft inescapably turns him who does not play the game into a self-seeker, and he who, lacking a self, lives by the principle of reality, is called selfless.

139 Addressee unknown

Cultivated philistines are in the habit of requiring that a work of art 'give' them something. They no longer take umbrage at works that are radical, but fall back on the shamelessly modest assertion that they do not understand. This eliminates even opposition, their last negative relationship to truth, and the offending object is smilingly catalogued among its kind, consumer commodities that can be chosen or refused without even having to take responsibility for doing so. One is just too stupid, too old-fashioned, one simply can't keep up, and the more one belittles oneself the more one can be sure of swelling the mighty unison of the *vox inhumana populi*, the judging power of the petrified *Zeitgeist*. Incomprehensibility, that benefits no-one, from being an inflammatory crime becomes pitiable folly. Together with the barb one deflects the temptation. That one must be given something, apparently the postulate of substantiality and fullness, cuts both off and impoverishes giving. In this, however, human relationships are like aesthetic. The reproach that someone gives one nothing is pitiful. If the relation has grown sterile, it should be broken off. But he who holds it fast and yet complains, is always devoid of the organ of receiving: fantasy. Both must give something, happiness, as precisely what is not exchangeable, not open to complaint, but such giving is inseparable from taking. All is over if what one finds for the other no longer reaches him. There is no love that is not an echo. In myths the warrant of grace was the acceptance of sacrifice; it is this acceptance that love, the re-enactment of sacrifice, beseeches if it is not to feel under a curse. The decay of giving is today matched by a hardness towards receiving. But this comes to the same thing as the denial of real happiness, that alone permits men to cling to their kind of happiness. The rampart would only be breached if they were to accept from others what, with a wry face, they refuse themselves. But this they find difficult because of the effort demanded by taking. Besotted with technique, they transfer their hatred for the superfluous exertion of their existence, to the expense of energy that pleasure, as a moment of their being, needs even in all its sublimations. Though facilitated in countless ways, their practice remains absurd toil; yet to squander strength on their lives' secret, happiness, is something they cannot endure. Here the watchword is 'relax and take it easy', a formula borrowed from the language of the nursing-home, not of exuberance. Happiness is obsolete: uneconomic. For its idea, sexual union, is the opposite of slackness, a blessed straining, just as that of all subjected labour is cursed.

140 Consecutio temporum[7]

When my first composition teacher, trying to knock the atonal nonsense out of me, found his tales of erotic scandals about the new composers proving ineffective, he switched his attack to what he suspected as my weak spot, by showing himself up-to-date. The ultra-modern, his argument ran, was no longer modern, the stimulations I sought were already numb, the expressive figures that excited me belonged to an out-dated sentimentality, and the new youth had, as he liked to put it, more red blood-corpuscles. His own pieces, in which oriental themes were regularly extended by the chromatic scale, betrayed the same ultra-subtle deliberations as the manœuvres of a conservatory director with a bad conscience. But I was soon to discover that the fashion he opposed to my modernity did actually resemble, in the primeval habitat of the great *salons*, what he had hatched up in the provinces. Neo-classicism, that form of reaction which not only fails to acknowledge itself as such but even passes off its reactionary moment as ahead of its time, was the advance-guard of a massive tendency which under Fascism and mass-culture quickly learned to be rid of tender concern for the endlessly tiresome sensibilities of artists, and to combine the spirit of Courths-Mahler[8] with that of technical progress. The modern has really become unmodern. Modernity is a qualitative, not a chronological, category. Just as it cannot be reduced to abstract form, with equal necessity it must turn its back on conventional surface coherence, the appearance of harmony, the order corroborated merely by replication. The stalwarts of the Fascist fighting leagues, thundering fulsomely against Futurism, saw more clearly in their rage than did the Moscow censors who placed Cubism on the Index because, in its private impropriety, it failed to measure up to the spirit of the collective age, or the brazen theatre critics who find a play by Strindberg or Wedekind *passé* but a piece of underground reportage up-to-date. All the same, their blasé philistinism utters an appalling truth: that the procession of total society which would like to force its organization on all expression, is in fact leaving behind the power which opposes what Lindbergh's wife called the wave of the future, that is, the critical construction of being. This is not merely outlawed by a corrupt public opinion, but the prevailing absurdity affects its very substance. The might of what is, constraining the mind to follow its example, is so overwhelming that even the unassimilated expression of protest assumes in face of it a home-spun, aimless, inexperienced quality reminiscent of the provincialism that once so prophetically suspected modernity of backwardness. Matching the psychological regression of individuals who exist without a self, is a regression of the objective spirit, in which obtuseness, primitivism and the bargain-sale set up what historically has long since decayed as the newest historical power, and consign to the day before yesterday everything that does not zealously join the march of regression. This *quid pro quo* of progress and reaction makes orientation in contemporary art almost as difficult as in politics, and furthermore paralyses production itself, where anyone who clings to extreme intentions is made to feel like a backwoodsman, while the conformist no longer lingers bashfully in arbours, literary or horticultural,[9] but hurtles forward, rocket-powered, into the pluperfect.

141 La nuance/encor'[10]

The demand that thinking and information dispense with nuances cannot be summarily dismissed as bowing to the prevalent obtuseness. Were linguistic nuance no longer perceptible, it would be itself implicated, not merely reception. Language is by its own objective substance social expression, even where it has abruptly severed itself from society as individual. Changes that it undergoes in communication involve the writer's uncommunicative material. Words and phrases spoilt by use do not reach the secluded workshop intact. And the historical damage cannot be repaired there. History does not merely touch on language, but takes place in it. What continues to be used in spite of usage smacks of simple-minded provincialism or cosy restoration. So thoroughly have all nuances

been perverted and sold off as 'flavour' that even advanced literary subtleties recall debased words like 'gloaming', 'pensive', 'verdant', 'fragrant'. The measures against banality are becoming banal, arty-crafty, with an undertone of moping consolation from that womanly world whose soulfulness complete with lutes and traditional costume, was politically co-ordinated in Germany. In the cultivated superior trash with which the intellectuals who survive there happily compete for the vacant posts of culture, what yesterday had a linguistically conscious air hostile to convention, reads today as olde-worlde prettifying. German culture seems faced with the alternative between a loathsome second *Biedermeier* or paper administrative philistinism. Yet this simplification, suggested not only by market interests but by cogent political motives and finally by the historical state of the language itself, does not so much overcome nuances as it tyrannically furthers their decay. It offers sacrifices to omnipotent society. But the latter, by virtue of its very omnipotence, is as incommensurable and alien to the subject of knowledge and expression as it ever was in the milder days when it spurned the language of common speech. The fact that human beings are absorbed by the totality without being humanly equal to it, makes institutionalized linguistic forms as vacuous as naively individualistic tone-values, and equally fruitless is the attempt to turn the tables on the former by admitting them to the literary medium: people incapable of reading a diagram posing as engineers. The collective language attractive to the writer who suspects his isolation of romanticism, is no less romantic: he usurps the voice of those for whom he cannot speak directly, as one of them, because his language, through reification, is as divorced from them as all are from each other; because the present form of the collective is in itself speechless. No collective entrusted today with expressing the subject, thereby becomes a subject. He who does not chime in with the official hymnic tone of festivals to liberation supervised by totalitarians, but seriously espouses the *aridité* recommended ambiguously enough by Roger Caillois, merely submits to an objective discipline as privation, without receiving anything concrete and general in exchange. The contradiction between the abstractness of the language that wants to do away with bourgeois subjectivism, and its emphatically concrete objects, does not reside in the incapacity of writers but in a historical antinomy. The subject wants to cede himself to the collective without being cancelled by it. Therefore his very forfeiture of the private becomes private, chimerical. His language, imitating single-handed the taut construction of society, fondly believes it has wakened cement to speech. As punishment, this unauthorized communal language commits incessant *faux pas*, matter-of-factness at the expense of matter and fact, not so very different from a bourgeois waxing eloquent. The conclusion to be drawn from the decay of nuance is not to cling obstinately to forms that have decayed, nor yet to extirpate them altogether, but rather to try to out-nuance them, to push them to the point where from subjective shading they switch to being a pure, specific definition of the object. The writer must combine the tightest control in ensuring that the word refers, without sidelong glances, to the matter alone, with the shedding of all phrases, the patient effort to detect what linguistically, in itself, carries meaning and what does not[.] But those in fear of falling in spite of everything behind the *Zeitgeist*, of being cast on the refuse-heap of discarded subjectivity, should be reminded that *arriviste* timeliness and progressive content are no longer the same. In an order which liquidates the modern as backward, this backwardness, once condemned, can be invested with the truth over which the historical process obliviously rolls. Because no other truth can be expressed than that which is able to fill the subject, anachronism becomes the refuge of modernity.

142 By this does German song abide[11]

Free verse was rejected by artists like George as a miscarried form, a hybrid between metre and prose. They are refuted by Goethe and by Hölderlin's late hymns. Their technical eye takes free verse at face value. They stop their ears to history by which free verse is stamped. Only in the period of their decay are free rhythms no more than prose periods printed one below the

other, in elevated tone. Where free verse proves a form in its own right, it has emerged from the metrical strophe, transcending subjectivity. It turns the pathos of metre against its own claims, a strict negation of ultimate strictness, just as musical prose, emancipated from the symmetry of the eight-beat rhythm, owes its existence to the implacable principles of construction which matured in the articulation of tonal regularity. In free rhythms the ruins of the artistically rhymeless classical strophe grow eloquent. Jutting their alien contours into the newer languages, they are suited by their strangeness to express what is not exhausted by communication. But they yield, unrescuable, to the flood of the languages in which they once stood erect. Only brokenly, marooned in the realm of communication and distinguishable from it by no capricious convolutions, do they signify distance and stylization, as if incognito, and without privilege, until in poetry like Trakl's the waves of dream close over the helpless verses. Not without reason was the epoch of free rhythms that of the French Revolution, the solemn entrance of human dignity and equality. But does not the conscious practice of such verses resemble the law followed by language as a whole in its unconscious history? Is not all carefully-fashioned prose really a system of free rhythms, an attempt to make the magic charm of the absolute coincide with the negation of its appearance, an effort of the mind to save the metaphysical power of expression by means of its own secularization? Were this so, a ray of light would fall on the sisyphean burden that every prose-writer has shouldered, now that demythologization has led to the destruction of language itself. Linguistic quixotry has become obligatory, since the putting-together of each sentence contributes to the decision whether language as such, ambiguous since primeval times, will succumb to commercialism and the consecrated lie that is a part of it, or whether it will make itself a sacred text by diffidence towards the sacral element on which it lives. Prose isolates itself so ascetically from poetry for the sake of invoking song.

143 In nuce

The task of art today is to bring chaos into order.

Artistic productivity is the capacity for being voluntarily involuntary.

Art is magic delivered from the lie of being truth.

Since works of art are sprung, for better or worse, from fetishes – are artists to be blamed if their attitude to their products is slightly fetishistic?

The art-form which has from earliest times laid the highest claims to spirituality, as representation of Ideas, drama, depends equally, by its innermost presuppositions, on an audience.

Just as, according to Benjamin, painting and sculpture translate the mute language of things into a higher but similar one, so it might be supposed that music rescues name as pure sound – but at the cost of severing it from things.

Perhaps the strict and pure concept of art is applicable only to music, while great poetry or great painting – precisely the greatest – necessarily brings with it an element of subject-matter transcending aesthetic confines, undissolved in the autonomy of form. The more profound and consequential an aesthetic theory, the more inappropriate it becomes to such works as the major novels of the nineteenth century. Hegel seized this advantage in his polemic against Kant.

The belief put about by aesthetic theorists that a work of art is to be understood as an object of immediate contemplation, purely on its own terms, is unsound. It is limited not merely by the cultural presuppositions of each work, its 'language', which only the initiate can follow. Even where there are no such difficulties, the work of art demands more than that one should merely abandon oneself to it. Anyone wishing to find the *Fledermaus* beautiful must know that it is the *Fledermaus*: his mother must have told him that it is not about the winged animal but a fancy-dress costume; he must remember having been told: tomorrow you can go to see the *Fledermaus*. To be within tradition used to mean: to experience the work of art as something sanctioned, valid: to participate through it in all the reactions of those who had seen it previously. Once this falls away, the work is exposed in its nakedness and fallibility. The plot, from a ritual, becomes idiocy, the music, from a canon of significant figures, flat and stale. It is really no longer so beautiful. From this mass-culture draws its right of adaptation. The weakness of all traditional culture outside its tradition provides the pretext for improving, and so barbarically mutilating it.

The comfort that flows from great works of art lies less in what they express than in the fact that they have man[a]ged to struggle out of existence. Hope is soonest found among the comfortless.

Kafka: the solipsist without ipseity.

Kafka, though an avid reader of Kierkegaard, is connected with existentialist philosophy only to the extent that one speaks of down-and-outs as 'annihilated existences'.

Surrealism breaks the *promesse du bonheur*. It sacrifices, to the appearance of happiness transmitted by any integral form, concern for its truth.

144 Magic flute

The ideology of cultural conservatism which sees enlightenment and art as simple antitheses is false, among other reasons, in overlooking the moment of enlightenment in the genesis of beauty. Enlightenment does not merely dissolve all the qualities that beauty adheres to, but posits the quality of beauty in the first place. The disinterested pleasure that according to Kant is aroused by works of art, can only be understood by virtue of historical antitheses still at work in each aesthetic object. The thing disinterestedly contemplated pleases because it once claimed the utmost interest and thus precluded contemplation. The latter is a triumph of enlightened self-discipline. Gold and precious stones, in the perception of which beauty and luxury still coexist undistinguished, were honoured as magical. The radiance they reflect was thought their own essence. Under their power falls whatever is touched by their light. This was early used in the mastering of nature. Jewels were seen as instruments for subjugating the course of the world by its own cunningly usurped power. The magic adhered to the illusion of omnipotence. This illusion was dispelled by mind's self-enlightenment, but the magic has survived as the power of radiant things over men, in whom they once instilled a dread that continues to hold their eyes spellbound, even after they have seen through its claim to domination. Contemplation, as a residue of fetishist worship, is at the same time a stage in overcoming it. As radiant things give up their magic claims, renounce the power with which the subject invested them and hoped with their help himself to wield, they become transformed into images of gentleness, promises of a happiness cured of domination over nature. This is the primeval history of luxury, that has migrated into the meaning of all art. In the magic of what reveals itself in absolute powerlessness, of beauty, at once perfection and nothingness, the

illusion of omnipotence is mirrored negatively as hope. It has escaped every trial of strength. Total purposelessness gives the lie to the totality of purposefulness in the world of domination, and only by virtue of this negation, which consummates the established order by drawing the conclusion from its own principle of reason, has existing society up to now become aware of another that is possible. The bliss of contemplation consists in disenchanted charm. Radiance is the appeasement of myth.

145 Art-object

Accumulated domestic monstrosities can shock the unwary by their relation to works of art. Even the hemispherical paper-weight with a fir-tree landscape submerged under glass and below it a greeting from Bad Wildungen has some resemblance to Stifter's green Fichtau,[12] even the polychrome garden dwarf to a little wight from Balzac or Dickens. This is the fault neither simply of the subjects nor of the abstract similarity of all aesthetic appearance. Rather the existence of trash expresses inanely and undisguisedly the fact that men have succeeded in reproducing from within themselves a piece of what otherwise imprisons them in toil, and in symbolically breaking the compulsion of adaptation by themselves creating what they feared; and an echo of the same triumph resounds in the mightiest works, though they seek to forgo it, imagining themselves pure self unrelated to any model. In both cases freedom from nature is celebrated, yet remains mythically entrapped. What men trembled before, they have placed at their own disposal. Great paintings and picture-postcards have in common that they have put primeval images at our fingertips. The illustration of *L'automne* in the schoolbook is a *déjà-vu*, the Eroica, like great philosophy, represents the idea as a total process, yet as if it were directly, sensuously present. In the end indignation over kitsch is anger at its shameless revelling in the joy of imitation, now placed under taboo, while the power of works of art still continues to be secretly nourished by imitation. What escapes the jurisdiction of existence and its purposes is not only a protesting better world but also a more stupid one incapable of self-assertion. This stupidity grows, the more autonomous art idolizes its isolated, allegedly innocent self-assertion instead of its real one, guilty and imperious. The subjective act, by presenting itself as the successful rescue of objective meaning, becomes untrue. Of this it is convicted by kitsch; the latter's lie does not even feign truth. It incurs hostility because it blurts out the secret of art and the affinity of culture to savagery. Every work of art has its irresoluble contradiction in the 'purposefulness without purpose' by which Kant defined the aesthetic; in the fact that it is an apotheosis of making, of the nature-ruling capacity that, as a second creation, postulates itself as absolute, purpose-free, existing in itself, whereas after all the act of making, indeed the very glorification of the artefact, is itself inseparable from the rational purposefulness from which art seeks to break away. The contradiction between what is and what is made, is the vital element of art and circumscribes its law of development, but it is also art's shame: by following, however indirectly, the existing pattern of material production and 'making' its objects, art as akin to production cannot escape the question 'what for?' which it aims to negate. The closer the mode of production of artefacts comes to material mass-production, the more naively it provokes that fatal question. Works of art, however, try to silence it. 'Perfection', as Nietzsche put it, 'must not have become',[13] that is, it should not appear made. Yet the more consequentially it distances itself, through perfection, from making, the more fragile its own made existence necessarily becomes: the endless pains to eradicate the traces of making, injure works of art and condemn them to be fragmentary. Art, following the decay of magic, has taken upon itself the transmission of images to posterity. But in this task it employs the same principle that destroyed images: the stem of its Greek name is the same as that of technique. Its paradoxical entanglement in the process of civilization brings it into conflict with its own idea. The archetypes of our time,

synthetically concocted by film and hit-song for the bleak contemplation of the late industrial era, do not merely liquidate art but, by their blatant feeble-mindedness, blast into daylight the delusion that was always immured in the oldest works of art and which still gives the maturest their power. Luridly the horror of the ending lights up the deception of the origin. – It is the fortune and limitation of French art never to have entirely eradicated the pride in making little pictures, just as it differs most obviously from German art in not acknowledging the concept of kitsch. In countless significant manifestations it casts a conciliatory glance at what pleases because it was skilfully made: sublime artistry keeps a hold on sensuous life by a moment of harmless pleasure in the *bien fait*. While the absolute claim of perfection without becoming, the dialectic of truth and appearance, is thus renounced, the untruth of those dubbed by Haydn the Grand Moguls is also avoided; they, determined to have no truck with the winsome vignette or figurine, succumb to fetishism by driving out all fetishes. Taste is the ability to keep in balance the contradiction in art between the made and the apparent not-having-become; true works of art, however, never at one with taste, are those which push this contradiction to the extreme, and realize themselves in their resultant downfall.

146 Toy shop

Hebbel, in a surprising entry in his diary, asks what takes away 'life's magic in later years'. 'It is because in all the brightly-coloured contorted marionettes, we see the revolving cylinder that sets them in motion, and because for this very reason the captivating variety of life is reduced to wooden monotony. A child seeing the tightrope-walkers singing, the pipers playing, the girls fetching water, the coachmen driving, thinks all this is happening for the joy of doing so; he can't imagine that these people also have to eat and drink, go to bed and get up again. We however, know what is at stake.' Namely, earning a living, which commandeers all those activities as mere means, reduces them to interchangeable, abstract labour-time. The quality of things ceases to be their essence and becomes the accidental appearance of their value. The 'equivalent form'[14] mars all perceptions: what is no longer irradiated by the light of its own self-determination as 'joy in doing', pales to the eye. Our organs grasp nothing sensuous in isolation, but notice whether a colour, a sound, a movement is there for its own sake or for something else; wearied by a false variety, they steep all in grey, disappointed by the deceptive claim of qualities still to be there at all, while they conform to the purposes of appropriation, indeed largely owe their existence to it alone. Disenchantment with the contemplated world is the sensorium's reaction to its objective role as a 'commodity world'. Only when purified of appropriation would things be colourful and useful at once: under universal compulsion the two cannot be reconciled. Children, however, are not so much, as Hebbel thought, subject to illusions of 'captivating variety', as still aware, in their spontaneous perception, of the contradiction between phenomenon and fungibility that the resigned adult no longer sees, and they shun it. Play is their defence. The unerring child is struck by the 'peculiarity of the equivalent form': 'use-value becomes the form of manifestation, the phenomenal form of its opposite, value'.[15]

In his purposeless activity the child, by a subterfuge, sides with use-value against exchange value. Just because he deprives the things with which he plays of their mediated usefulness, he seeks to rescue in them what is benign towards men and not what subserves the exchange relation that equally deforms men and things. The little trucks travel nowhere and the tiny barrels on them are empty; yet they remain true to their destiny by not performing, not participating in the process of abstraction that levels down that destiny, but instead abide as allegories of what they are specifically for. Scattered, it is true, but not ensnared, they wait to see whether society will finally remove the social stigma on them; whether the vital process between men and things, praxis, will cease to be practical. The

unreality of games gives notice that reality is not yet real. Unconsciously they rehearse the right life. The relation of children to animals depends entirely on the fact that Utopia goes disguised in the creatures whom Marx even begrudged the surplus value they contribute as workers. In existing without any purpose recognizable to men, animals hold out, as if for expression, their own names, utterly impossible to exchange. This makes them so beloved of children, their contemplation so blissful. I am a rhinoceros, signifies the shape of the rhinoceros. Fairy-tales and operettas know such images, and the ridiculous question of the woman: how do we know that Orion is really called Orion, rises to the stars.

147 Novissimum organum[16]

It has long been demonstrated that wage-labour formed the masses of the modern epoch, indeed created the worker himself. As a general principle the individual is not merely the biological basis, but the reflection of the social process; his consciousness of himself as something in-itself is the illusion needed to raise his level of performance, whereas in fact the individuated function in the modern economy as mere agents of the law of value. The inner constitution of the individual, not merely his social role, could be deduced from this. Decisive here, in the present phase, is the category of the organic composition of capital. By this the theory of accumulation meant the 'growth in the mass of the means of production, as compared with the mass of the labour-power that vivifies them'.[17] If the integration of society, particularly in totalitarian states, designates subjects more and more exclusively as partial moments in the network of material production, then the 'alteration of the technical composition of capital' is prolonged within those encompassed, and indeed constituted, by the technological demands of the production process. The organic composition of man is growing. That which determines subjects as means of production and not as living purposes, increases with the proportion of machines to variable capital. The pat phrase about the 'mechanization' of man is deceptive because it thinks of him as something static which, through an 'influence' from outside, an adaptation to conditions of production external to him, suffers certain deformations. But there is no substratum beneath such 'deformations', no ontic interior on which social mechanisms merely act externally: the deformation is not a sickness in men but in the society which begets its children with the 'hereditary taint' that biologism projects on to nature. Only when the process that begins with the metamorphosis of labour-power into a commodity has permeated men through and through and objectified each of their impulses as formally commensurable variations of the exchange relationship, is it possible for life to reproduce itself under the prevailing relations of production. Its consummate organization demands the coordination of people that are dead. The will to live finds itself dependent on the denial of the will to live: self-preservation annuls all life in subjectivity. Compared to this, all the achievements of adaptation, all the acts of conformity described by social psychology and cultural anthropology, are mere epiphenomena. The organic composition of man refers by no means only to his specialized technical faculties, but – and this the usual cultural criticism will not at any price admit – equally to their opposite, the moments of naturalness which once themselves sprung from the social dialectic and are now succumbing to it. Even what differs from technology in man is now being incorporated into it as a kind of lubrication. Psychological differentiation, originally the outcome both of the division of labour that dissects man according to sectors of the production process and of freedom, is finally itself entering the service of production. 'The specialized "virtuoso"', one dialectician wrote thirty years ago, 'the vendor of his objectified and reified faculties … lapses into a contemplative attitude towards the workings of his own objectified and reified faculties. This phenomenon can be seen at its most grotesque in journalism. Here it is subjectivity itself, knowledge, temperament and powers of expression

that are reduced to an abstract mechanism, functioning autonomously and divorced both from the personality of their "owner" and from the material and concrete nature of the subject-matter in hand. The journalist's "lack of convictions", the prostitution of his experiences and beliefs is comprehensible only as the apogee of capitalist reification.'[18] What was here noted among the 'degenerate manifestations' of the bourgeoisie, which it still itself denounced, has since emerged as the social norm, as the character of irreproachable existence under late industrialism. It has long ceased to be a matter of the mere sale of the living. Under a priori saleability the living has made itself, as something living, a thing, equipment. The ego consciously takes the whole man into its service as a piece of apparatus. In this re-organization the ego as business-manager delegates so much of itself to the ego as business-mechanism, that it becomes quite abstract, a mere reference-point: self-preservation forfeits its self. Character traits, from genuine kindness to the hysterical fit of rage, become capable of manipulation, until they coincide exactly with the demands of a given situation. With their mobilization they change. All that is left are the light, rigid, empty husks of emotions, matter transportable at will, devoid of anything personal. They are no longer the subject; rather, the subject responds to them as to his internal object. In their unbounded docility towards the ego they are at the same time estranged from it: being wholly passive they nourish it no longer. This is the social pathogenesis of schizophrenia. The severance of character traits both from their instinctual basis and from the self, which commands them where it formerly merely held them together, causes man to pay for his increasing inner organization with increasing disintegration. The consummation of the division of labour within the individual, his radical objectification, leads to his morbid scission. Hence the 'psychotic character', the anthropological pre-condition of all totalitarian mass-movements. Precisely this transition from firm characteristics to push-button behaviour-patterns – though apparently enlivening – is an expression of the rising organic composition of man. Quick reactions, unballasted by a mediating constitution, do not restore spontaneity, but establish the person as a measuring instrument deployed and calibrated by a central authority. The more immediate its response, the more deeply in reality mediation has advanced: in the prompt, unresistant reflexes the subject is entirely extinguished. So too, biological reflexes, the models of the present social ones, are – when measured against subjectivity – objectified, alien: not without reason are they often called 'mechanical'. The closer organisms are to death, the more they regress to such twitching. Accordingly the destructive tendencies of the masses that explode in both varieties of totalitarian state are not so much death-wishes as manifestations of what they have already become. They murder so that whatever to them seems living, shall resemble themselves.

Translated by E.F.N. Jephcott

Notes

1 Title of a work by Hans Christian Andersen.

2 This passage is a criticism of Brecht's play *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*. Adorno later developed this critique of Brecht's theatre in his essay entitled 'Engagement' in *Noten zur Literatur III*, Frankfurt, 1965, pp. 109–35.

3 August Stramm (1874–1915) was a laconic expressionist poet before the First World War; Oskar Kokoschka (born 1886), before acquiring prominence as a painter, wrote a series of imagistic dramas in the period 1907–1919.

4 Jakob Burckhardt, *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, Berlin, 1902, vol. IV, pp. 515–16.

5 Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, London, 1973, pp. 258–59.

6 Inversion of the lines by Heine: *Aus meinem grossen Schmerzen / mach' ich die kleinen Lieder* ('From my great sorrows, I make small songs'), in his *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, XXXVI.
7 'Sequence of tenses.'
8 Hedwig Courths-Mahler (1867–1950): best-seller novelist of popular sentimental romances.
9 Allusion to *Die Gartenlaube*, an illustrated family magazine of patriotic-conservative tendency in the late nineteenth century.
10 *Car nous voulons la nuance encor', / Pas la couleur, rien que la nuance!* – lines from Verlaine's poem *Art Poétique*, a symbolist manifesto.
11 *Dem folgt deutscher Gesang*: last line of Hölderlin's poem *Patmos*.
12 Fichtau is the idyllic valley that appears in Adalbert Stifter's tales *Die Narrenburg* and *Prokopus*.
13 Nietzsche, *Werke*, Munich, 1954, vol. I, p. 545 (*Human All-Too-Human*, Edinburgh–London, 1910, p. 153).
14 See Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, Moscow, 1961, pp. 55ff.
15 Ibid., p. 56.
16 Superlatization of the title of Bacon's treatise *Novum Organum*.
17 Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, p. 622.
18 Georg Lukács, *History and Class-Consciousness*, London, 1971, p. 100.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Theodor W. Adorno in English

Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments (1947, with M. Horkheimer), trans. J. Cumming, New York: Continuum, 1972.
Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments (1947, with M. Horkheimer), trans. E. Jephcott, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.
Philosophy of New Music (1949), ed. and trans. R. Hullot-Kentor, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life (1951), trans. E.F.N. Jephcott, London: Verso, 1978.
Against Epistemology: A Metacritique; Studies in Husserl and the Phenomenological Antinomies (1956), trans. W. Domingo, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982.
Notes to Literature (1958, 1961) 2 vols., ed. R. Tiedemann, trans. S. Weber Nicholsen, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1959), ed. R. Tiedemann, trans. R. Livingstone, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy (1960), trans. E. Jephcott, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
Introduction to the Sociology of Music (1962), trans. E.B. Ashton, New York: Continuum, 1989.
Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic (1962), trans. R. Hullot-Kentor, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.
Hegel: Three Studies (1963), trans. S. Weber Nicholsen, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993.
The Jargon of Authenticity (1964), trans. K. Tarnowski, London: Routledge, 1973.
Metaphysics: Concept and Problems (1965), ed. R. Tiedemann, trans. E. Jephcott, Cambridge: Polity, 2001.
Negative Dialectics (1966), trans. E.B. Ashton, London: Routledge, 1973.
Prisms (1967), trans. S. and S. Weber, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981.
Alban Berg: Master of the Smallest Link (1968), trans. J. Brand and C. Hailey, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Introduction to Sociology (1968), ed. C. Gödde, trans. E. Jephcott, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
Aesthetic Theory (1970), trans. C. Lenhardt, London: Routledge, 1984.
Aesthetic Theory (1970), trans. R. Hullot-Kentor, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
The Philosophy of Modern Music, trans. A. Mitchell and W. Blomster, New York: Seabury Press, 1973.
Quasi una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music, trans. R. Livingstone, London: Verso, 1992.
Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music; Fragments and Texts (1993), ed. R. Tiedemann, trans. E. Jephcott, Cambridge: Polity, 1998.

The Complete Correspondence 1928–1940 (with W. Benjamin; 1994), ed. H. Lonitz, trans. N. Walker, Cambridge: Polity, 1999.
History and Freedom: Lectures 1964/65 (2001), ed. R. Tiedemann, Cambridge: Polity, 2006.
Lectures on Negative Dialectics: Fragments of a Lecture Course 1965/66 (2003), ed. R. Tiedemann, Cambridge: Polity, 2008.
The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture, ed. J.M. Bernstein, London: Routledge, 1991.
The Adorno Reader, ed. B. O'Connor, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
Essays on Music: Theodor W. Adorno, ed. R.D. Leppert, trans. S.H. Gillespie *et al.*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
Can One Live after Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader, ed. R. Tiedemann, trans. R. Livingstone, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Further reading

A detailed overview of Adorno's work is provided by Brunkhorst (1999), Jarvis (1998), and Jay (1984). For collections covering different aspects of his work, see Huhn (2004) and Pensky (1997).

Introductions to Adorno's aesthetics are provided by Edgar (1990) and Wilson (2008), with critical interpretations and evaluations given by Baur (1996), Bernstein (1996), Bowie (2004), Davey (2002), Frow (1982), Hammer (2000), Huhn (2003), Huhn and Zuidervaart (1997), Kuspit (1975), de Mul (2003), Nicholsen (1997), Roberts (1991), Stark (1998), and Zuidervaart (1990, 1991, 1999). Blomster (1976), Brown (1992), Edgar (1999), Kuspit (1975), Lewandowski (1996), Nesbitt (1999), Paddison (1993), Spitzer (2006), Wilcock (1996), and Witkin (1998) consider Adorno's musical aesthetics, while Caputi (2006) assesses the implications of his thought for visual art. His position on popular culture is addressed by Baugh (1990), Brown (1992), and Cook (1996). For responses to Adorno's stance on poetry after Auschwitz, see Davenport (2000) and Hofmann (2005).

Feminist readings of Adorno are offered by Franks (2006), Han (2006), Heberle (2006), and Mullin (2000), and the relation between Adorno and Derrida is explored by Menke (1998). For a study of Adorno's engagement with German philosophy, and the task of making philosophy 'concrete', see O'Connor (2004).

B. Baugh, 'Left-wing elitism: Adorno on popular culture', *Philosophy and Literature*, 1990, vol. 14, pp. 65–78.
M. Baur, 'Adorno and Heidegger on art in the modern world', *Philosophy Today*, 1996, vol. 40, pp. 357–66.
J. Bernstein, 'The death of sensuous particulars: Adorno and abstract expressionism', *Radical Philosophy: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Philosophy*, 1996, vol. 76, pp. 7–18.
W.V. Blomster, 'Sociology of music: Adorno and beyond', *Telos*, 1976, vol. 76, pp. 81–112.
A. Bowie, 'Adorno, pragmatism, and aesthetic relativism', *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 2004, vol. 58, pp. 25–45.
L.B. Brown, 'Adorno's critique of popular culture: the case of jazz music', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 1992, vol. 26, pp. 17–31.
H. Brunkhorst, *Adorno and Critical Theory*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999.
M. Caputi, 'Unmarked and unrehearsed: Theodor Adorno and the performance art of Cindy Sherman', in R. Heberle (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Theodor Adorno*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006, pp. 301–20.
D. Cook, *The Culture Industry Revisited: Theodor W. Adorno on Mass Culture*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996.
M. Davenport, 'Can we write poetry after Auschwitz? Lyotard's postmodern answer to Adorno', *Southwest Philosophy Review*, 2000, vol. 17, pp. 53–60.
N. Davey, 'Art's enigma: Adorno and Iser on interpretation', *Existentia*, 2002, vol. 12, pp. 155–68.
A. Edgar, 'An introduction to Adorno's aesthetics', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 1990, vol. 30, pp. 46–56.
———, 'Adorno and musical analysis', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1999, vol. 57, pp. 439–49.
M.A. Franks, 'An-aesthetic theory: Adorno, sexuality, and memory', in R. Heberle (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Theodor Adorno*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006, pp. 193–216.
J. Frow, 'Mediation and metaphor: Adorno and the sociology of art', *Clio*, 1982, vol. 12, pp. 57–66.
E. Hammer, 'The touch of art: Adorno and the sublime', *SATS: Nordic Journal of Philosophy*, 2000, vol. 1, pp. 91–105.
S.Y. Han, 'Intersectional sensibility and the shudder', in R. Heberle (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Theodor Adorno*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006, pp. 173–92.
R. Heberle (ed.), *Feminist Interpretations of Theodor Adorno*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006.

K. Hofmann, 'Poetry after Auschwitz: Adorno's dictum', *German Life and Letters*, 2005, vol. 58, pp. 182–94.
T. Huhn, 'Heidegger, Adorno, and mimesis', *Dialogue and Universalism*, 2003, vol. 13, pp. 43–52.
——— (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
T. Huhn and L. Zuidervaart (eds), *The Semblance of Subjectivity*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997.
S. Jarvis, *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*, New York: Routledge, 1998.
M. Jay, *Adorno*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984.
D.B. Kuspit, 'Critical notes on Adorno's sociology of music and art', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1975, vol. 33, pp. 321–27.
L.Y. Lee, *Dialectics of the Body: Corporeality in the Philosophy of T.W. Adorno*, New York: Routledge, 2005.
J.D. Lewandowski, 'Adorno on jazz and society', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 1996, vol. 22, pp. 103–21.
C. Menke, *The Sovereignty of Art: Aesthetic Negativity in Adorno and Derrida*, trans. N. Solomon, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998.
J. de Mul, 'Hegel, Heidegger, Adorno and the ends of art', *Dialogue and Universalism*, 2003, vol. 13, pp. 23–41.
A. Mullin, 'Adorno, art theory, and feminist practice', *Philosophy Today*, 2000, vol. 44, pp. 16–30.
N. Nesbitt, 'Sounding autonomy: Adorno, Coltrane and jazz', *Telos*, 1999, vol. 116, pp. 81–98.
S.W. Nicholsen, *Exact Imagination, Late Work: On Adorno's Aesthetics*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997.
B. O'Connor, *Adorno's Negative Dialectic: Philosophy and the Possibility of Critical Rationality*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004.
M. Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
M. Pensky (ed.), *The Actuality of Adorno: Critical Essays on Adorno and the Postmodern*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.
D. Roberts, *Art and Enlightenment: Aesthetic Theory after Adorno*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991.
M. Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven's Late Style*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
T. Stark, 'The dignity of the particular: Adorno on Kant's aesthetics', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 1998, vol. 24, pp. 61–83.
E. Wilcock, 'Adorno, jazz and racism: "Über Jazz" and the 1934–7 British Jazz Debate', *Telos*, 1996, vol. 107, pp. 63–80.
R. Wilson, 'Aesthetics', in D. Cook (ed.), *Theodor Adorno: Key Concepts*, Durham: Acumen Publishing, 2008.
R.W. Witkin, *Adorno on Music*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998.
L. Zuidervaart, 'The social significance of autonomous art: Adorno and Burger', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1990, vol. 48, pp. 61–77.
———, *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991.
———, 'Autonomy, negativity, and illusory transgression: Menke's deconstruction of Adorno's aesthetics', *Philosophy Today*, 1999, vol. 43, pp. 154–68.

Chapter 14

HERBERT MARCUSE

INTRODUCTION

Born in Berlin, Herbert Marcuse (1898–1978) joined the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research in 1932. One year later, with the Nazi rise to power, he followed Horkheimer and other colleagues to New York, and remained in the United States for the rest of his teaching career. His wide-ranging research combines Hegelian Marxism with insights drawn from phenomenology, existentialism, psychoanalysis, and aesthetics. Whereas Adorno rejects the *telos* of conceptual unity in Hegel, Marcuse emphasizes the anticipatory, revolutionary aspect of *Aufhebung* in the dialectic, so that it becomes a theory of experience which allows a *telos* of utopian possibility always to be visible in the material conditions of society.

Characteristic of Marcuse's Hegelianism is the claim that negation entails affirmation. While his pessimistic *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (1964) shares Horkheimer and Adorno's opinion that there is no longer any effective potential for dissent, *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972), written shortly after the student rebellions of 1968, displays a renewed commitment to the possibility of social change. Although 'the highest stage of capitalist development corresponds, in the advanced capitalist countries, to a low of revolutionary potential', he observes, the 'inner dynamic of capitalism' nevertheless changes the pattern of revolution, with the consequence that the dynamic of capitalism in fact 'extends the potential mass base for revolution, and it necessitates the revival of the radical rather than minimum goals of socialism'.[1] The argument is, in effect, a retrieval of the most important, yet subtle and easily overlooked, adjustment Hegel is asking us to make. Concept and object are placed in a dialectical relationship not to sustain philosophy's privileging of the universal over the particular (the reading of Hegel to which Adorno inclines) but to show that any incongruity or inadequacy which exists between them can be turned around to become a force for the dissolution of their binary opposition.

'Nature and Revolution', in *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972), shows how changes in the structure of society are linked to changes in our sensory experience of reality. The essay builds upon the dynamic species relationship Marx constructs between nature and the senses in 'Private Property and Communism'. Human perception, Marcuse avers, constitutes a 'radical sensibility'. Far from being merely receptive and passive, sensation is the process which binds us materially and socially to the world; it shapes 'the categories under which the world is ordered, experienced, changed'. The emancipation of the senses, he argues, would transform nature from being an object of capitalist exploitation to being 'an environment for the human being as "species-being"'. Sensory emancipation, for Marcuse, is achieved through art. If the premise, from Marx, is accepted that human aesthetic sensibility is an expression of species-being, i.e. man's interrelationship with nature, then human sensory gratification, e.g. the experience of beauty, is also the release of 'nature's *own* gratifying forces'. On this account, and

wholly consistent with the Hegelian thesis that a negative can become a positive, art and the experience of beauty, both largely reconstructed in the eighteenth century as an affirmation of bourgeois, capitalist identity, are transformed into experiences which can motivate social change away from capitalism.

The article gives us an insight into one of the major disputes in Marxist aesthetics: does art best serve the Marxist cause by being a mimetic representation of the world – showing reality as it is or how it ought to be – or by carving out a region of its own (art for art's sake) which, in virtue of its relative autonomy, becomes a source of social critique? Some Marxist philosophers (notably Lukács in his criticism of expressionism)[2] attack the latter view on the grounds that aesthetic autonomy, as they see it, reinforces the bourgeois notion of an independent self, utterly removed from wider, social concerns. Marcuse though defends the autonomy of art against such opposition in his most well-known work on aesthetics, *The Aesthetic Dimension: A Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (1977). Aesthetic experience, conceived as an independent phenomenon, he declares, enables the individual to 'withdraw from the reality of bourgeois society' and 'become a powerful force in *invalidating* the actually prevailing bourgeois values'.[3] His account of aesthetic transformation anticipates this position.

'Nature and Revolution' cites feminism as an example of aesthetic transformation. By denying women full participation in the workplace, and by determining them as tender, receptive, and sensuous, Marcuse suggests, capitalism has allowed women to remain relatively free from the 'brutalities' of capitalist economy so that, collectively, they constitute a fund of sensibility which holds out the promise of emancipation. Just how 'woman' is to be conceptualized here is an ontological question, not an empirical one. 'Woman' is being considered not just as one category among others but as a category which underlines a whole new theory of being and, therefore, which affects how we understand the applicability of concepts in general. The contrast between 'woman' as an ontological essence and as an existentialist dynamic is one of the main arenas for discussion in the feminist aesthetics of Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva.

Notes

1 H. Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1972, p. 5.
2 G. Lukács, 'Expressionism: its significance and decline', *Essays on Realism*, ed. R. Livingstone, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1980, pp.153–73.
3 H. Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: A Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*, trans. Herbert Marcuse and Erica Sherover, Boston: Beacon Press, 1978, p. 4.

■ ■ ■

NATURE AND REVOLUTION

HERBERT MARCUSE

I

The novel historical pattern of the coming revolution is perhaps best reflected in the role played by a new sensibility in radically changing the 'style' of the opposition. I have sketched out this new dimension in *An Essay on Liberation*; here I shall attempt to indicate what is at stake, namely, a new relation between man and nature – his own, and external nature. The radical transformation of nature becomes an integral part of the radical transformation of society. Far

from being a mere 'psychological' phenomenon in groups or individuals, the new sensibility is the medium in which social change becomes an individual need, the mediation between the political practice of 'changing the world' and the drive for personal liberation.

What is happening is the discovery (or rather, rediscovery) of nature as an ally in the struggle against the exploitative societies in which the violation of nature aggravates the violation of man. The discovery of the liberating forces of nature and their vital role in the construction of a free society becomes a new force in social change.

What is involved in the liberation of nature as a vehicle of the liberation of man?

This notion refers to (1) *human* nature: man's primary impulses and senses as foundation of his rationality and experience and (2) *external* nature: man's existential environment, the 'struggle with nature' in which he forms his society. It must be stressed from the beginning that, in both of these manifestations, nature is a historical entity: man encounters nature as transformed by society, subjected to a specific rationality which became, to an ever-increasing extent, technological, instrumentalist rationality, bent to the requirements of capitalism. And this rationality was also brought to bear on man's own nature, on his primary drives. To recall only two characteristic contemporary forms of the adaptation of primary drives to the needs of the established system: the social steering of *aggressiveness* through transferring the aggressive act to technical instruments, thus reducing the sense of guilt; and the social steering of *sexuality* through controlled desublimation, the plastic beauty industry, which leads to a reduction of the sense of guilt and thus promotes 'legitimate' satisfaction.

Nature is a part of history, an object of history; therefore, 'liberation of nature' cannot mean returning to a pre-technological stage, but advancing to the use of the achievements of technological civilization for freeing man and nature from the destructive abuse of science and technology in the service of exploitation. Then, certain lost qualities of artisan work may well reappear on the new technological base.

In the established society, nature itself, ever more effectively controlled, has in turn become another dimension for the control of man: the extended arm of society and its power. Commercialized nature, polluted nature, militarized nature cut down the life environment of man, not only in an ecological but also in a very existential sense. It blocks the erotic cathexis (and transformation) of his environment: it deprives man from finding himself in nature, beyond and this side of alienation; it also prevents him from recognizing nature as a *subject* in its own right – a subject with which to live in a common human universe. This deprivation is not undone by the opening of nature to massive fun and togetherness, spontaneous as well as organized – a release of frustration which only adds to the violation of nature.

Liberation of nature is the recovery of the life-enhancing forces in nature, the sensuous aesthetic qualities which are foreign to a life wasted in unending competitive performances: they suggest the new qualities of *freedom*. No wonder then that the 'spirit of capitalism' rejects or ridicules the idea of liberated nature, that it relegates this idea to the poetic imagination. Nature, if not left alone and protected as 'reservation,' is treated in an aggressively scientific way: it is there for the sake of domination; it is value-free matter, material. This notion of nature is a *historical* a priori, pertaining to a specific form of society. A free society may well have a very different a priori and a very different object; the development of the scientific concepts may be grounded in an experience of nature as a totality of life to be protected and 'cultivated,' and technology would apply this science to the reconstruction of the environment of life.

Domination of man through the domination of nature: the concrete link between the liberation of man and that of nature has become manifest today in the role which the ecology drive plays in the radical movement. The pollution of air and water, the noise, the encroachment of industry and commerce on open natural space have the physical weight of enslavement,

imprisonment. The struggle against them is a political struggle; it is obvious to what extent the violation of nature is inseparable from the economy of capitalism. At the same time, however, the political function of ecology is easily 'neutralized' and serves the beautification of the Establishment. Still, the physical pollution practiced by the system must be combated here and now – just as its mental pollution. To drive ecology to the point where it is no longer containable within the capitalist framework means first extending the drive *within* the capitalist framework.[1]

The relation between nature and freedom is rarely made explicit in social theory. In Marxism too, nature is predominantly an object, the adversary in man's 'struggle with nature,' the field for the ever more rational development of the productive forces.[2] But in this form, nature appears as that which capitalism has *made* of nature: matter, raw material for the expanding and exploiting administration of men and things. Does this image of nature conform to that of a free society? Is nature only a productive force – or does it also exist '*for its own sake*' and, in *this* mode of existence, for *man*?

In the treatment of *human* nature, Marxism shows a similar tendency to minimize the role of the natural basis in social change – a tendency which contrasts sharply with the earlier writings of Marx. To be sure, 'human nature' would be different under socialism to the degree to which men and women would, for the first time in history, develop and fulfill their own needs and faculties in association with each other. But this change is to come about almost as a by-product of the new socialist institutions. Marxist emphasis on the development of political consciousness shows little concern with the roots of liberation in individuals, i.e., with the roots of social relationships there where individuals most directly and profoundly experience their world and themselves: in their *sensibility*, in their instinctual needs.

In *An Essay on Liberation*, I suggested that without a change in this dimension, the old Adam would be reproduced in the new society, and that the construction of a free society *presupposes* a break with the familiar experience of the world: with the mutilated sensibility. Conditioned and 'contained' by the rationality of the established system, sense experience tends to 'immunize' man against the very unfamiliar experience of the possibilities of human freedom. The development of a radical, non-conformist sensibility assumes vital political importance in view of the unprecedented extent of social control perfected by advanced capitalism: a control which reaches down into the instinctual and physiological level of existence. Conversely, resistance and rebellion, too, tend to activate and operate on this level.

'Radical sensibility': the concept stresses the active, constitutive role of the senses in shaping reason, that is to say, in shaping the categories under which the world is ordered, experienced, changed. The senses are not merely passive, receptive: they have their own 'syntheses' to which they subject the primary data of experience. And these syntheses are not only the pure 'forms of intuition' (space and time) which Kant recognized as an inexorable a priori *ordering* of sense data. There are perhaps also other syntheses, far more concrete, far more 'material,' which may constitute an empirical (i.e., historical) a priori of experience. Our world emerges not only in the pure forms of time and space, but also, and *simultaneously*, as a totality of sensuous qualities – object not only of the eye (synopsis) but of *all* human senses (hearing, smelling, touching, tasting). It is this qualitative, elementary, unconscious, or rather preconscious, constitution of the world of experience, it is this primary experience itself which must change radically if social change is to be radical, qualitative change.

II

The subversive potential of the sensibility, and nature as a field of liberation are central themes in Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*. They have been reread and reinterpreted again and again, but these themes have been largely neglected. Recently, the Manuscripts served to justify the concept of 'humanistic socialism' in opposition to the bureaucratic-authoritarian

Soviet model; they provided a powerful impetus in the struggle against Stalinism and post-Stalinism. I believe that in spite of their 'pre-scientific' character, and in spite of the prevalence of Feuerbach's philosophic naturalism, these writings espouse the most radical and integral idea of socialism, and that precisely here, 'nature' finds its place in the theory of revolution.

I recall briefly the principal conception of the Manuscripts. Marx speaks of the 'complete emancipation of all human senses and qualities'[3] as the feature of socialism: only this emancipation is the 'transcendence of private property.' This means the emergence of a new type of man, different from the human subject of class society in his very nature, in his physiology: 'the *senses* of the social man are *other* than those of the non-social man.'[4]

'*Emancipation of the senses*' implies that the senses become 'practical' in the reconstruction of society, that they generate new (socialist) relationships between man and man, man and things, man and nature. But the senses become also 'sources' of a new (socialist) *rationality*: freed from that of exploitation. The emancipated senses would repel the instrumentalist rationality of capitalism while preserving and developing its achievements. They would attain this goal in two ways: *negatively* – inasmuch as the Ego, the other, and the object world would no longer be experienced in the context of aggressive acquisition, competition, and defensive possession; *positively* – through the 'human appropriation of nature,' i.e., through the transformation of nature into an environment (medium) for the human being as 'species being'; free to develop the specifically human faculties: the creative, aesthetic faculties.

'Only through the objectively unfolded richness of man's essential being is the richness of subjective human sensibility (a musical ear, an eye for beauty of form – in short, *senses* capable of human gratification, senses affirming themselves as essential powers of man) either cultivated or brought into being.'[5] The emancipated senses, in conjunction with a natural science proceeding on their basis, would guide the 'human appropriation' of nature. Then, nature would have 'lost its mere utility,'[6] it would appear not merely as stuff – organic or inorganic matter – but as life force in its own right, as subject–object;[7] the striving for life is the substance common to man and nature. Man would then form a living object. The senses would 'relate themselves to the thing for the sake of the thing.'[8] And they can do so only inasmuch as the thing itself is objectified human *Verhalten*: objectification of human relationships and is thus itself humanly related to man.[9]

This outrageously unscientific, metaphysical notion foreshadows the mature materialistic theory: it grasps the world of things as objectified human labor, shaped by human labor. Now if this forming human activity produces the technical and natural environment of an acquisitive and repressive society, it will also produce a dehumanized nature; and radical social change will involve a radical transformation of nature.

Also of the *science* of nature? Nature as manifestation of subjectivity; the idea seems inseparable from teleology – long since taboo in Western science. Nature as object per se fitted all too well into the universe of the capitalist treatment of matter to allow discarding the taboo. It seemed entirely justified by the increasingly effective and profitable mastery of nature which was achieved under this taboo.

Is it true that the recognition of nature as a subject is metaphysical teleology incompatible with scientific objectivity? Let us take Jacques Monod's statement of the meaning of objectivity in science:

> What I have tried to show … is that the scientific attitude implies what I call the postulate of objectivity – that is to say, the fundamental postulate that there is no plan, that there is no intention in the universe.[10]

The idea of the liberation of nature stipulates no such plan or intention in the universe: liberation is the possible plan and intention of human beings, brought to bear upon nature. However, it does

stipulate that nature is susceptible to such an undertaking, and that there are forces in nature which have been distorted and suppressed – forces which could support and enhance the liberation of man. This capacity of nature may be called 'chance,' or 'blind freedom,' and it may give good meaning to the human effort to redeem this blindness – in Adorno's words: to help nature 'to open its eyes,' to help it 'on the poor earth to become what perhaps it would like to be.'[11]

Nature as subject without teleology, without 'plan' and 'intention': this notion goes well with Kant's 'purposiveness without purpose.' The most advanced concepts of the Third Critique have not yet been explored in their truly revolutionary significance. The aesthetic form in art has the aesthetic form in nature (*das Naturschöne*) as its correlate, or rather desideratum. If the idea of beauty pertains to nature as well as to art, this is not merely an analogy, or a human idea imposed on nature – it is the insight that the aesthetic form, as a token of freedom, is a mode (or moment?) of existence of the human as well as the natural universe, an objective quality. Thus Kant attributes the beautiful in nature to nature's 'capacity to form itself, in its freedom, also in an aesthetically purposive way, according to chemical laws. …'[12]

The Marxian conception understands nature as a universe which becomes the congenial medium for human gratification to the degree to which nature's *own* gratifying forces and qualities are recovered and released. In sharp contrast to the capitalist exploitation of nature, its 'human appropriation' would be nonviolent, nondestructive: oriented on the life-enhancing, sensuous, aesthetic qualities inherent in nature. Thus transformed, 'humanized,' nature would respond to man's striving for fulfillment, nay, the latter would not be possible without the former. Things have their 'inherent measure' (*inhärentes Mass*):[13] this measure is *in* them, is the potential enclosed in them; only man can free it and, in doing so, free his own human potential. Man is the only being who can 'form things in accordance with the laws of beauty.'[14]

Aesthetics of liberation, beauty as a 'form' of freedom: it looks as if Marx has shied away from this anthropomorphist, idealistic conception. Or is this apparently idealistic notion rather the *enlargement of the materialistic base*? For 'man is directly a *natural being*; he is a corporeal, living, real, sensuous, objective being' who has 'real, sensuous objects' as the objects of his life.[15] And his senses ('like those organs which are directly social in their form')[16] are active, practical in the 'appropriation' of the object world; they express the social existence of man, his 'objectification.' This is no longer Feuerbach's 'naturalism' but, on the contrary, the extension of Historical Materialism to a dimension which is to play a vital role in the liberation of man.

There is, however, a definite internal limit to the idea of the liberation of nature through 'human appropriation.' True, the aesthetic dimension is a vital dimension of freedom; true, it repels violence, cruelty, brutality, and by this token will become an essential quality of a free society, not as a separate realm of 'higher culture,' but as a driving force and *motive* in the *construction* of such a society. And yet, certain brute facts, unconquered and perhaps unconquerable facts, call for skepticism. Can the human appropriation of nature ever achieve the elimination of violence, cruelty, and brutality in the daily sacrifice of animal life for the physical reproduction of the human race? To treat nature 'for its own sake' sounds good, but it is certainly not for the sake of the animal to be eaten, nor probably for the sake of the plant. The end of this war, the perfect peace in the animal world – this idea belongs to the Orphic myth, not to any conceivable historical reality. In the face of the suffering inflicted by man on man, it seems terribly 'premature' to campaign for universal vegetarianism or synthetic food-stuffs; as the world is, priority must be on *human* solidarity among human beings. And yet, no free society is imaginable which does not, under its 'regulative idea of reason,' make the concerted effort to reduce consistently the suffering which man imposes on the animal world.

Marx's notion of a human appropriation of nature retains something of the *hubris* of domination. 'Appropriation,' no matter how human, remains appropriation of a (living) object

by a subject. It offends that which is essentially other than the appropriating subject, and which exists precisely as object in its own right – that is, as subject! The latter may well be hostile to man, in which case the relation would be one of struggle; but the struggle may also subside and make room for peace, tranquillity, fulfillment. In this case, not appropriation but rather its negation would be the non-exploitative relation: surrender, 'letting-be,' acceptance … But such surrender meets with the impenetrable resistance of matter; nature is not a manifestation of 'spirit,' but rather its essential *limit*.

III

Although the historical concept of nature as a dimension of social change does not imply teleology and does not attribute a 'plan' to nature, it does conceive of nature as subject–object: as a *cosmos* with its own potentialities, necessities, and chances. And these potentialities can *be*, not only in the sense of their value-free function in theory and practice, but also as bearers of *objective values*. These are envisaged in such phrases as 'violation of nature,' 'suppression of nature.' Violation and suppression then mean that human action against nature, man's interrelation with nature, offends against certain objective *qualities* of nature – qualities which are essential to the enhancement and fulfillment of life. And it is on such objective grounds that the liberation for man to his own humane faculties is linked to the liberation of nature – that 'truth' is attributable to nature not only in a mathematical but also in an existential sense. The emancipation of man involves the recognition of such truth in things, in nature. The Marxian vision recaptures the ancient theory of knowledge as *recollection*: 'science' as the *re*discovery of the true *Forms* of things, distorted and denied in the established reality, the perpetual *materialistic core of idealism*. The 'idea,' as the term for these Forms, is not a 'mere' idea, but an image illuminating what is false, distorted in the way in which things are 'given,' what is missing in their familiar perception, in the mutilated experience which is the work of society.

Recollection thus is not remembrance of a Golden Past (which never existed), of childhood innocence, primitive man, et cetera. Recollection as epistemological faculty rather is synthesis, reassembling the bits and fragments which can be found in the distorted humanity and distorted nature. This recollected material has become the domain of the imagination, it has been sanctioned by the repressive societies in art, and as 'poetic truth' – poetic truth only, and therefore not much good in the actual transformation of society. These images may well be called 'innate ideas' inasmuch as they cannot possibly be given in the immediate experience which prevails in the repressive societies. They are given rather as the *horizon* of experience under which the immediately given forms of things appear as 'negative,' as denial of their inherent possibilities, their truth. But in this sense, they are 'innate' in man as *historical* being; they are themselves historical because the possibilities of liberation are always and everywhere historical possibilities. Imagination, *as knowledge*, retains the insoluble tension between idea and reality, the potential and the actual. This is the *idealistic core* of dialectical materialism: the transcendence of freedom beyond the given forms. In this sense too, Marxian theory is the historical heir of German Idealism.

Freedom thus becomes a 'regulative concept of reason' guiding the practice of changing reality in accordance with its 'idea,' i.e., its own potentialities – to make reality free for its truth. Dialectical materialism understands freedom as historical, empirical transcendence, as a force of social change, transcending its immediate form also in a socialist society – not toward ever more production, not toward Heaven or Paradise, but toward an ever more peaceful, joyful struggle with the inexorable resistance of society and nature. This is the philosophical core of the theory of the permanent revolution.

As such force, freedom is rooted in the primary drives of men and women, it is the vital need to enhance their life instincts. Prerequisite is the capacity of the senses to experience not only the 'given' but also the 'hidden' qualities of things which would make for the betterment of life. The radical redefinition of sensibility as 'practical' desublimates the idea of freedom without abandoning its transcendent content: the senses are not only the basis for the *epistemological* constitution of reality, but also for its *transformation*, its *subversion* in the interest of liberation.

Human freedom is thus rooted in the human *sensibility*: the senses do not only 'receive' what is given to them, in the form in which it appears, they do not 'delegate' the transformation of the given to another faculty (the understanding); rather, they discover or *can* discover by themselves, in their 'practice,' new (more gratifying) possibilities and capabilities, forms and qualities of things, and can urge and guide their realization. The emancipation of the senses would make freedom what it is not yet: a sensuous need, an objective of the Life Instincts (*Eros*).

In a society based on alienated labor, human sensibility is *blunted*: men perceive things only in the forms and functions in which they are given, made, used by the existing society; and they perceive only the possibilities of transformation as defined by, and confined to, the existing society.[17] Thus, the existing society is *reproduced* not only in the mind, the consciousness of men, but *also in their senses*; and no persuasion, no theory, no reasoning can break this prison, unless the fixed, petrified *sensibility* of the individuals is '*dissolved*,' *opened* to *a new dimension of history*, until the oppressive familiarity with the given object world is broken – broken in a *second alienation*: that from the alienated society.

Today, in the revolt against the 'consumer society,' sensibility strives to become 'practical,' the vehicle for radical reconstruction, for new ways of life. It has become a force in the *political* struggle for liberation.[18] And that means: the individual emancipation of the senses is supposed to be the beginning, even the foundation, of *universal* liberation, the free society is to take roots in new instinctual needs. How is this possible? How can 'humanity,' human solidarity as '*concrete universal*' (and not as abstract value), as real force, as 'praxis,' originate in the individual sensibility; how can objective freedom originate in the most subjective faculties of man?

We are faced with the *dialectic* of the universal and the particular: how can the human sensibility, which is *principium individuationis*, also generate a *universalizing* principle?

I refer again to the philosophical treatment of this problem in German idealism: here is the intellectual origin of the Marxian concept. For *Kant*: a universal sensorium (the pure forms of intuition) constitutes the one unified framework of sense experience, thus validating the universal categories of the understanding. For *Hegel*: reflection on the content and mode of *my* immediate sense certainty reveals the 'We' in the 'I' of intuition and perception. When the still unreflected consciousness has reached the point where it becomes conscious of itself and its relation to its objects, where it has experienced a 'trans-sensible' world 'behind' the sensuous appearance of things, it discovers that we ourselves are behind the curtain of appearance. And this 'we' unfolds as social reality in the struggle between Master and Servant for 'mutual recognition.'

This is the turning point on the road that leads from Kant's effort to reconcile man and nature, freedom and necessity, universal and particular, to Marx's materialistic solution: Hegel's *Phenomenology* breaks with Kant's transcendental conception: history and society enter into the theory of knowledge (and into the very structure of knowledge) and do away with the 'purity' of the a priori: the materialization of the idea of freedom begins. But a closer look shows that the same tendency was already present in Kant's philosophy: in the development from the First to the Third Critique.

1) In the *First Critique*, the freedom of the subject is present only in the epistemological syntheses of the sense data; freedom is relegated to the transcendental Ego's pure syntheses: it is the power of the a priori by virtue of which the transcendental subject constitutes the objective world of experience; theoretical knowledge.

2) In the *Second Critique*, the realm of *praxis* is reached with the stipulation of the autonomy of the moral person: his power to *originate* causation without breaking the universal causation which governs nature: necessity. The price: subjection of the sensibility to the categorical imperative of reason. The relation between human freedom and natural necessity remains obscure.

3) In the *Third Critique*, man and nature are joined in the aesthetic dimension, the rigid 'otherness' of nature is reduced, and Beauty appears as 'symbol of morality.' The union of the realm of freedom and that of necessity is here conceived not as the mastery of nature, not as bending nature to the purposes of man, but as attributing to nature an ideal purposiveness 'of its own: a purposiveness without purpose.'

But it is only the *Marxian* conception which, while preserving the critical, transcendent element of idealism, uncovers the material, historical ground for the reconciliation of human freedom and natural necessity; subjective and objective freedom. This union presupposes liberation: the revolutionary *praxis* which is to abolish the institutions of capitalism and to replace them by socialist institutions and relationships. But in this transition, the emancipation of the senses must accompany the emancipation of consciousness, thus involving the *totality* of human existence. The individuals themselves must change in their very instincts and sensibilities if they are to build, in association, a *qualitatively* different society. But why the emphasis on *aesthetic* needs in this reconstruction?

IV

It is not just in passing and out of exuberance that Marx speaks of the formation of the object world 'in accordance with the laws of beauty' as a feature of free human practice. Aesthetic qualities are essentially nonviolent, nondomineering (I shall come back to it in Chapter III) – qualities which, in the domain of the arts, and in the repressive use of the term 'aesthetic' as pertaining to the sublimated 'higher culture' only, are divorced from the social reality and from 'practice' as such. The revolution would undo this repression and recapture aesthetic needs as a subversive force, capable of counteracting the dominating aggressiveness which has shaped the social and natural universe. The faculty of being 'receptive,' 'passive,' is a precondition of freedom: it is the ability to see things in their own right, to experience the joy enclosed in them, the erotic energy of nature – an energy which is there to be liberated; nature, too, awaits the revolution! This receptivity is itself the soil of creation: it is opposed, not to productivity, but to *destructive* productivity.

The latter has been the ever more conspicuous feature of male domination; inasmuch as the 'male principle' has been the ruling mental and physical force, a free society would be the 'definite negation' of this principle – it would be a *female* society. In this sense, it has nothing to do with matriarchy of any sort; the image of the woman as mother is itself repressive; it transforms a biological fact into an ethical and cultural value and thus it supports and justifies her social repression. At stake is rather the ascent of Eros over aggression, in men *and* women; and this means, in a male-dominated civilization, the 'femalization' of the male. It would express the decisive change in the instinctual structure: the weakening of primary aggressiveness which, by a combination of biological and social factors, has governed the patriarchal culture.

In this transformation, the Women's Liberation Movement becomes a radical force to the degree to which it transcends the entire sphere of aggressive needs and performances, the entire social organization and division of functions. In other words, the movement becomes radical to the degree to which it aims, not only at equality *within* the job and value structure of the *established* society (which would be the equality of dehumanization) but rather at a change in the structure itself (the basic demands of equal opportunity, equal pay, and release from full-time household and child care are a prerequisite). Within the established structure, neither men nor

women are free – and the dehumanization of men may well be greater than that of women since the former suffer not only the conveyor belt and assembly line but also the standards and 'ethics' of the 'business community.'

And yet, the liberation of women would be more sweeping than that of men because the repression of women has been constantly fortified by the social use of their biological constitution. The bearing of children, being a mother, is supposed to be not only their natural function but also the fulfillment of their 'nature' – and so is being a wife, since the reproduction of the species occurs within the framework of the monogamous patriarchal family. Outside this framework, the woman is still predominantly a plaything or a temporary outlet for sexual energy not consummated in marriage.

Marxian theory considers sexual exploitation as the primary, original exploitation, and the Women's Liberation Movement fights the degradation of the woman to a 'sexual object.' But it is difficult to overcome the feeling that here, repressive qualities characteristic of the bourgeois-capitalist organization of society enter into the fight against this organization. Historically, the image of the woman as sexual object, and her exchange value on the market, devalue the earlier repressive images of the woman as mother and wife. These earlier images were essential to the bourgeois ideology during a period of capitalist development now left behind: the period where some 'inner-worldly asceticism' was still operative in the dynamic of the economy. In comparison, the present image of the woman as sexual object is a *desublimation* of bourgeois morality – characteristic of a 'higher stage' of capitalist development. Here, too, the commodity form is universalized: it now invades formerly sanctified and protected realms. The (female) body, as seen and plastically idealized by *Playboy*, becomes desirable merchandise with a high exchange value. Disintegration of bourgeois morality, perhaps – but *cui bono*? To be sure, this new body image promotes sales, and the plastic beauty may not be the real thing, but they stimulate aesthetic-sensuous needs which, in their development, must become incompatible with the body as instrument of alienated labor. The male body, too, is made the object of sexual image creation – also plasticized and deodorized ... clean exchange value. After the secularization of religion, after the transformation of ethics into Orwellian hypocrisy – is the 'socialization' of the body as sexual object perhaps one of the last decisive steps toward the completion of the exchange society: the completion which is the beginning of the end?

Still, the publicity with the body (at present, the female body) as object is dehumanizing, the more so since it plays up to the dominant male as the aggressive subject for whom the female is there, to be taken, to be laid. It is in the nature of sexual relationships that both, male and female, are object *and* subject at the same time; erotic and aggressive energy are fused in both. The surplus-aggression of the male is socially conditioned – as is the surplus-passivity of the female. But beneath the social factors which determine male aggressiveness and female receptivity, a *natural* contrast exists: it is the woman who 'embodies,' in a literal sense, the promise of peace, of joy, of the end of violence. Tenderness, receptivity, sensuousness have become features (or mutilated features) of her body – features of her (repressed) humanity. These female qualities may well be socially determined by the development of capitalism. The process is truly dialectical.[19] Although the reduction of the concrete individual faculties to abstract labor power established an abstract equality between men and women (equality before the machine), this abstraction was less complete in the case of women. They were employed in the material process of production to a lesser extent than men. Women were fully employed in the household, the family, which was supposed to be the sphere of realization for the bourgeois individual. However, this sphere was isolated from the productive process and thus contributed to the women's mutilation. And yet, this isolation (separation) from the alienated work world of capitalism enabled the woman to remain less brutalized by the Performance Principle, to remain closer to her sensibility:

more human than men. That this image (and reality) of the woman has been determined by an aggressive, male-dominated society does not mean that this determination must be rejected, that the liberation of women must overcome the female 'nature.' This equalization of male and female would be regressive: it would be a new form of female acceptance of a male principle. Here too the historical process is dialectical: the patriarchal society has created a female image, a female counter-force, which may still become one of the gravediggers of patriarchal society. In this sense too, the woman holds the promise of liberation. It is the woman who, in Delacroix' painting, holding the flag of the revolution, leads the people on the barricades. She wears no uniform; her breasts are bare, and her beautiful face shows no trace of violence. But she has a rifle in her hand – for the end of violence is still to be fought for …

Notes

1 See Murray Bookchin, 'Ecology and Revolutionary Thought' and 'Towards a Liberatory Technology,' in *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, Berkeley: Ramparts Press, 1971.
2 See Alfred Schmidt, *Der Begriff der Natur in der Lehre von Marx*, Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1962.
3 Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, ed. Dirk J. Struik, New York: International Publishers, 1964, p. 139 [p. 229 in this volume].
4 Ibid., p. 141 [p. 230].
5 Ibid., p. 141 [p. 230].
6 Ibid., p. 139 [p. 229].
7 'The sun is the object of the plant … just as the plant is an object for the sun' (ibid., p. 181).
8 Ibid., p. 139 [p. 229].
9 'For the sake of the thing' – an illustration:

> In Yugoslavia, they sell wooden cutting boards which, on one side, are painted with very colorful, pretty flower patterns; the other side is unpainted. The boards bear the imprint: 'don't hurt my pretty face, use other side.' Childish anthropomorphism? Certainly. But can we perhaps imagine that the people who had this idea, and those users who pay attention to it, have a quite natural, instinctual aversion against violence and destruction, that they have indeed a 'human relation' to matter, that matter to them is part of the *life* environment and thus assumes traits of a living object?

10 Interview with the *New York Times*, March 15, 1971.
11 Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetische Theorie*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1970, pp. 100, 107.
12 *Critique of Judgment*, S 58.
13 Marx, *Manuscripts*, p. 114.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., p. 181.
16 Ibid., p. 139 [p. 214].
17 For the following see my *An Essay on Liberation*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1969, pp. 36ff.
18 The fight for the People's Park in Berkeley, which was met with brute force by the armed guardians of law and order, shows the explosion of sensibility in political action.
19 This dialectic is the center of Angela Davis's paper 'Marxism and Women's Liberation' (not yet published). Written in jail, this paper is the work of a great woman, militant, intellectual.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Herbert Marcuse in English

Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941.
Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Enquiry into Freud, Boston: Beacon Press, 1955.
One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society, Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.
Negations: Essays in Critical Theory, Boston: Beacon Press, 1968.
An Essay on Liberation, Boston: Beacon Press, 1969.
Five Lectures, Boston: Beacon Press, 1970.
Counterrevolution and Revolt, Boston: Beacon Press, 1972.
Studies in Critical Philosophy, Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.
Revolution or Reform: A Confrontation (with Karl Popper), ed. A. Ferguson, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.
The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics, Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.
Hegel's Ontology, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987.

Further reading

N. Fischer, 'Frankfurt school Marxism and the ethical meaning of art: Herbert Marcuse's *The Aesthetic Dimension*', *Communication Theory*, 1997, vol. 7, pp. 362–81.
P. Guyer, 'Marcuse and classical aesthetics', *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 2008, vol. 62, pp. 349–65.
L. Hartwick, 'On the aesthetic dimension – a conversation with Herbert Marcuse', *Contemporary Literature*, 1981, vol. 22, pp. 416–24.
C. Reitz, *Art, Alienation, and the Humanities: A Critical Engagement with Herbert Marcuse*, New York: State University of New York Press, 2000.
K.H. Wolff and B. Moore (eds), *The Critical Spirit: Essays in Honour of Herbert Marcuse*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1967.

Chapter 15

MIKHAIL BAKHTIN

INTRODUCTION

Recognition of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) as one of the twentieth century's most important literary theorists has come relatively late, due to the troubled history of his native Russia. Although his 1929 book on Dostoevsky was well received, his exile in the same year to the town of Kustanai in Soviet Central Asia (for alleged involvement in the underground Russian Orthodox Church), followed by a long period of self-imposed obscurity in Mordovia, meant that he received no further recognition until his 'rehabilitation' as a cult figure in 1960s Russia. The year 1965 saw the publication in Russia of what has become his best-known book, *Rabelais and his World*, originally submitted as his doctoral thesis in the 1940s.[1]

Bakhtin was a literary theorist whose writing career began in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. He was aware of Marxist theorists and doctrines and supported their commitment to thought and language being fundamentally sociological and material. Literature is an ideological form, he writes in *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, with P.N. Medvedev, because it 'refracts the generating socioeconomic reality' and also 'reflects and refracts the reflections and refractions of other ideological spheres (ethics, epistemology, political doctrines, religion, etc.). That is, in its "content" literature reflects the whole of the ideological horizon of which it itself is a part.'[2] This stance is in opposition to the psychologism which presents thought and language as personal or subjectively internal events, as advanced, for example, by Freud. Yet Bakhtin's interest in *the form* as well as the content of literature puts him at odds with Marxist literary criticism and its emphasis on content. Bakhtin's affinity with Russian formalism, propounded by Roman Jakobson, Viktor Shklovsky, and Boris Eikhenbaum, only extends so far though, namely to acknowledgement of the importance of the linguistic features of literary texts. Literary study, he writes, 'must take advantage of all the work of linguistics to understand... the technical aspects of the poet's creation'.[3] Beyond this, Bakhtin and Russian formalism are diametrically opposed, largely due to the fact that formalism ignores the social and political determinants of literature, and treats the literary work as a complete whole, explicable in terms of the devices at work within it. For Bakhtin, the work always remains 'open', unfinished, on account of it being made up from a network of voices whose interactions never stabilize.

There are some parallels with Saussurean structuralism here, especially with regard to the notion that meaning is a property of the exchanges between words, and not an isolatable content that can be located in a mind or tied to an object. However, Bakhtin also distances himself from structuralism on the grounds that it studies language as an abstract system suspended in time and, as such, in his view, is not equipped to account for creativity and historical change in the use of language. Even though Saussure distinguishes between language as *langue* (in the abstract, as

the structure which precedes and makes language possible) and as *parole* (language in use), the distinction is still subordinate to the belief that an utterance, an act of *parole*, can be analysed in terms of the particular structural codes used by the speaker for expressing their thoughts. According to Voloshinov (although there is a case for taking this to be Bakhtin, as I explain below), 'linguistics, as Saussure conceives it, cannot have the utterance as its object of study' because it takes the utterance to be 'a thoroughly individual entity', an isolated event explicable in terms of how an individual speaks, and therefore fails to consider the orientations and implications from and towards others which define the utterance as an act in a situation.[4]

Reception of Bakhtin's work has also had to accommodate a dispute surrounding authorship. In 1971, the Soviet linguist V.V. Ivanov declared that texts attributed to Bakhtin's friends in the 1920s, such as *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* by Valentin Voloshinov and *The Formal Method in Literary Studies* by Pavel Medvedev, were in fact Bakhtin's own. The matter ultimately remains unresolved as Voloshinov and Medvedev were no longer alive in 1971. According to Morris, there is widespread support in the West for the view that these are Bakhtin's works, including a detailed case made by Holquist and Clark in their scholarly biography of Bakhtin.[5] However, against this, Morson and Emerson assert that there is insufficient evidence to treat Bakhtin as the sole author of the works attributed to Voloshinov and Medvedev, since these texts offer 'a particularly complex and rewarding form of Marxism';[6] in contrast, Morson and Emerson suggest, Bakhtin's trademark was always the demonstration of the inadequacies of Marxism.[7]

The controversy over authorship is deeply ironic, given the nature of Bakhtin's ideas. At the heart of his literary theory is the concept of language as an innovative and dynamic system of utterances, always situated and in use. An important term employed by Bakhtin in this respect is the Russian '*slovo*' which can be translated as 'discourse' (not in Foucault's sense) or 'word', where 'word' is understood not as a unit in isolation but as an active form resonant with other words – supportive, conflicting, ambivalent – that might be uttered by respondents in similar or potentially similar situations. Discourse is 'double-voiced' or 'dialogic' in that any single utterance will be constituted by or acknowledge *more than one way of speaking*. On this model, a sentence, rather than being the unified expression of a single mind in isolation as it is customarily understood, is instead a response to a situation which has in mind words that have already been spoken by others and words that may still be to come from others. The irony is that, on this view, my words are also those of another, in a fashion which frustrates any attempt to attribute authorship or the origin of meaning to any one source.

The scope of Bakhtin's philosophy continues to be the subject of scholarship. His early work focused on ethics and aesthetics, while towards the end of his life he undertook a study of the philosophical bases of the human sciences, unfinished at the time of his death in 1975. At the heart of his philosophy though, as it is currently received in the West, is his work on the novel, and his formulations of the concepts of 'carnival' in his study of Rabelais and the 'dialogic' or 'dialogical' from his work on Dostoyevsky. There is continuity between 'carnival' and the 'dialogical' in as much as both reject the idea of coming to know life and reality through a singular, uniform representation of the world and, instead, promote participation, transformation, and intersecting perspectives as ways of being and knowing. Carnival though is not a wholly literary phenomenon. Instead, Bakhtin writes in *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, 'it is a *syncretic pageantry* of a ritualistic sort':[8] 'a spatial and temporal envisioning of human existence in the world', Morris declares, realized through festivities and spectacles which both celebrate and ridicule the human body through grotesquely exaggerated sensuous forms drawn from medieval tradition.[9] But, Bakhtin insists, carnival 'does not know footlights… [It] is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people.'[10] The interplay

of celebration and ridicule prevents any one value of the body becoming dominant (for example, the contest between the body as a location of pleasure and the medieval repudiation of flesh), and suggests that the human body is a communal body, a site open to alternative, creative, dialogic forms of understanding.

'Heteroglossia in the Novel' is a section from the essay 'Discourse in the Novel', originally published in *Problems of Literature and Aesthetics* in 1975. The essay as a whole is, with the exception of certain chapters in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, the most thorough articulation of his philosophy of language. As Holquist suggests, the novel for Bakhtin is not simply one genre among others but more a 'force', what Holquist calls 'novelness'.[11] A space is created where utterances can be made in a context through a variety of interacting social languages: those of different generations, professions, epochs, and idioms, as exercised in the speech of the characters and voice of the narrator. Linguistic meaning, rather than being presented as a predetermined content signalled from one speaking subject to another (as it is in conventional receiver–sender models of communication), is here shown to be achieved through an open-ended, situation-dependent network of possibilities arising from the push-and-pull of contrasting discourses. 'Heteroglossia' (*raznorečie*) is arguably the most fundamental concept in Bakhtin's notion of 'dialogic discourse' (and in his notion of 'carnival' too). According to Morris, it asserts that language is 'stratified through and through into multiple social discourses each representing a specific ideological-belief system, a way of seeing the world'.[12] Equally important though, Holquist suggests, is the focusing, contextual dimension of heteroglossia: the way in which the context of an utterance can refract, add to, or even subtract from the multiplicity of meanings generated through stratification in order to arrive at a localized set of possibilities. On this model, the speaking subject is not the source of meaning. Rather, her utterances are always 'double-voiced'. She has to negotiate a range of discourses, some (if not all) of which will already be active in the situation and in the discourses selected by her interlocutor, and adopt those which she judges will be most successful in allowing her intentions to be mediated through the already-existing meanings. This makes heteroglossia, in the words of Bakhtin, '*another's speech in another's language*, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way'.

Bakhtin takes us through the various ways in which heteroglossia operates in the novel. He concentrates upon the comic novel, with extended references to Charles Dickens's *Little Dorrit*, Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, and Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* and *Virgin Soil*. Comic style is significant because it plays 'with the boundaries of speech types, languages and belief systems'. It is based 'on the stratification of common language and on the possibilities available for isolating from these strata, to one degree or another, one's own intentions, without ever completely merging with them'. Whether through storytelling, mimicking, or reporting from a particular point of view, comic style will mix and match professional, generic, and common languages, often within the same sentence. One of Bakhtin's examples is a passage in *Little Dorrit* where Dickens's authorial voice adopts the language of the lawyer's speech: 'Bar could not at once return to his inveiglements of the most enlightened and remarkable jury he had ever seen in that box', with the inclusion of the word 'inveiglement' emphasizing, as Bakhtin points out, 'the parodic nature of the re-processing of the lawyer's speech'. It is important to observe that Dickens's authorial voice is technically not his own. Authorial intention is expressed 'in a refracted way'. Within any utterance, in a novel or in discourse at large, there are always at least two voices at work, and these voices are not self-contained but also 'internally dialogized', that is to say, they themselves are constituted by their engagement with other voices. It is from the refraction which occurs through these dialogic intersections that authorial intention or the contribution of the speaker or writer emerges.

The interesting question here is what Bakhtin understands by 'refraction' in this context, how refraction creates or participates in meaning conceived dialogically. Refraction is not reflection, is not a mirroring, but a change of direction, the appearance of a new or modified form, as with a stick appearing bent when half-submerged in water or when white light is dispersed by a prism into the colours of the spectrum. Although Bakhtin uses the term frequently in 'Discourse in the Novel', he does not expand on the idea at length in that text or in others. There is the assertion made by Voloshinov (possibly Bakhtin), in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, that refraction occurs because words are 'vital and mutable', allowing different social classes to generate differently oriented meanings with one and the same set of signs.[13] However, some insight can be gleaned by attending to Bakhtin's notion of 'outsideness' or 'exotopy' (*vnenakhodimost'*). Holquist proposes that refraction is the way in which 'outsideness' breaks into language; it is, he writes, 'the particular corner in apperception [the awareness I have that I am perceiving] where such authoring can take place – the self's workshop, as it were'.[14]

Notes

1 M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. H. Iswolsky, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
2 M. Bakhtin and P.N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, in P. Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader*, London: Edward Arnold, 1994, p. 128.
3 Quoted by K. Clark and M. Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, p. 189.
4 V.N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. L. Matejka and I.R. Titunik, in P. Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader*, London: Edward Arnold, 1994, p. 31.
5 P. Morris, 'Introduction', in P. Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader*, London: Edward Arnold, 1994, p. 2. See also M. Holquist and K. Clark, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984, pp. 146–70.
6 Quoted by P. Harris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader*, London: Edward Arnold, 1994, p. 3.
7 See G.S. Morson and C. Emerson (eds), *Rethinking Bakhtin: Extensions and Challenges*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1989, pp. 31–60.
8 Quoted by Morris, *The Bakhtin Reader*, p. 21.
9 Morris, *The Bakhtin Reader*, p. 21.
10 M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. H. Iswolsky, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984, p. 7.
11 M. Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 72.
12 Morris, 'Introduction to social heteroglossia', in P. Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader*, London: Edward Arnold, 1994, p. 73.
13 P. Ives, *Gramsci's Politics of Language: Engaging the Bakhtin Circle and the Frankfurt School*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004, p. 80.
14 M. Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*, p. 32.

■ ■ ■

HETEROGLOSSIA IN THE NOVEL[1]

MIKHAIL BAKHTIN

The orientation of the word amid the utterances and languages of others, and all the specific phenomena connected with this orientation, takes on *artistic* significance in novel style. Diversity of voices and heteroglossia enter the novel and organize themselves within it into a structured artistic system. This constitutes the distinguishing feature of the novel as a genre.

Any stylistics capable of dealing with the distinctiveness of the novel as a genre must be a *sociological stylistics*. The internal social dialogism of novelistic discourse requires the concrete social context of discourse to be exposed, to be revealed as the force that determines its entire stylistic structure, its 'form' and its 'content', determining it not from without, but from within; for indeed, social dialogue reverberates in all aspects of discourse, in those relating to 'content' as well as the 'formal' aspects themselves.

The development of the novel is a function of the deepening of dialogic essence, its increased scope and greater precision. Fewer and fewer neutral, hard elements ('rock bottom truths') remain that are not drawn into dialogue. Dialogue moves into the deepest molecular and, ultimately, subatomic levels.

Of course, even the poetic word is social, but poetic forms reflect lengthier social processes, i.e., those tendencies in social life requiring centuries to unfold. The novelistic word, however, registers with extreme subtlety the tiniest shifts and oscillations of the social atmosphere, it does so, moreover, while registering it as a whole, in all of its aspects.

When heteroglossia enters the novel it becomes subject to an artistic reworking. The social and historical voices populating language, all its words and all its forms, which provide language with its particular concrete conceptualizations, are organized in the novel into a structured stylistic system that expresses the differentiated socio-ideological position of the author amid the heteroglossia of his epoch.

The compositional forms for appropriating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel, worked out during the long course of the genre's historical development, are extremely heterogeneous in their variety of generic types. Each such compositional form is connected with particular stylistic possibilities, and demands particular forms for the artistic treatment of the heteroglot 'languages' introduced into it. We will pause here only on the most basic forms that are typical for the majority of novel types.

The so-called comic novel makes available a form for appropriating and organizing heteroglossia that is both externally very vivid and at the same time historically profound: its classic representatives in England were Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Dickens, Thackeray and others, and in Germany Hippel and Jean Paul.

In the English comic novel we find a comic-parodic re-processing of almost all the levels of literary language, both conversational and written, that were current at the time. Almost every novel we mentioned above as being a classic representative of this generic type is an encyclopedia of all strata and forms of literary language: depending on the subject being represented, the storyline parodically reproduces first the forms of parliamentary eloquence, then the eloquence of the court, or particular forms of parliamentary protocol, or court protocol, or forms used by reporters in newspaper articles, or the dry business language of the City, or the dealings of speculators, or the pedantic speech of scholars, or the high epic style, or Biblical style, or the style of the hypocritical moral sermon or finally the way one or another concrete and socially determined personality, the subject of the story, happens to speak.

This usually parodic stylization of generic, professional and other strata of language is sometimes interrupted by the direct authorial word (usually as an expression of pathos, of

Sentimental or idyllic sensibility), which directly embodies (without any refracting) semantic and axiological intentions of the author. But the primary source of language usage in the comic novel is a highly specific treatment of 'common language'. This 'common language' – usually the average norm of spoken and written language for a given social group – is taken by the author precisely as the *common view*, as the verbal approach to people and things normal for a given sphere of society, as the *going point of view* and the going *value*. To one degree or another, the author distances himself from this common language, he steps back and objectifies it, forcing his own intentions to refract and diffuse themselves through the medium of this common view that has become embodied in language (a view that is always superficial and frequently hypocritical).

The relationship of the author to a language conceived as the common view is not static – it is always found in a state of movement and oscillation that is more or less alive (this sometimes is a rhythmic oscillation): the author exaggerates, now strongly, now weakly, one or another aspect of the 'common language', sometimes abruptly exposing its inadequacy to its object and sometimes, on the contrary, becoming one with it, maintaining an almost imperceptible distance, sometimes even directly forcing it to reverberate with his own 'truth', which occurs when the author completely merges his own voice with the common view. As a consequence of such a merger, the aspects of common language, which in the given situation had been parodically exaggerated or had been treated as mere things, undergo change. The comic style demands of the author a lively to-and-fro movement in his relation to language, it demands a continual shifting of the distance between author and language, so that first some, then other aspects of language are thrown into relief. If such were not the case, the style would be monotonous or would require a greater individualization of the narrator – would, in any case, require a quite different means for introducing and organizing heteroglossia.

Against this same backdrop of the 'common language', of the impersonal, going opinion, one can also isolate in the comic novel those parodic stylizations of generic, professional and other languages we have mentioned, as well as compact masses of direct authorial discourse – pathos-filled, moral-didactic, sentimental-elegiac or idyllic. In the comic novel the direct authorial word is thus realized in direct, unqualified stylizations of poetic genres (idyllic, elegiac, etc.) or stylizations of rhetorical genres (the pathetic, the moral-didactic). Shifts from common language to parodying of generic and other languages and shifts to the direct authorial word may be gradual, or may be on the contrary quite abrupt. Thus does the system of language work in the comic novel.

We will pause for analysis on several examples from Dickens, from his novel *Little Dorrit*.

(1) The conference was held at four or five o'clock in the afternoon, when all the region of Harley Street, Cavendish Square, was resonant of carriage-wheels and double-knocks. It had reached this point when Mr. Merdle came home *from his daily occupation of causing the British name to be more and more respected in all parts of the civilized globe capable of appreciation of wholewide commercial enterprise and gigantic combinations of skill and capital.* For, though nobody knew with the least precision what Mr. Merdle's business was, except that it was to coin money, these were the terms in which everybody defined it on all ceremonious occasions, and which it was the last new polite reading of the parable of the camel and the needle's eye to accept without inquiry. [Book 1, ch. 33]

The italicized portion represents a parodic stylization of the language of ceremonial speeches (in parliaments and at banquets). The shift into this style is prepared for by the sentence's construction, which from the very beginning is kept within bounds by a somewhat ceremonious epic tone. Further on – and already in the language of the author (and consequently in a different

style) – the parodic meaning of the ceremoniousness of Merdle's labors becomes apparent: such a characterization turns out to be 'another's speech', to be taken only in quotation marks ('these were the terms in which everybody defined it on all ceremonious occasions').

Thus the speech of another is introduced into the author's discourse (the story) in *concealed form*, that is, without any of the *formal* markers usually accompanying such speech, whether direct or indirect. But this is not just another's speech in the same 'language' – it is another's utterance in a language that is itself 'other' to the author as well, in the archaicized language of oratorical genres associated with hypocritical official celebrations.

(2) In a day or two it was announced to all the town, that Edmund Sparkler, Esquire, son-in-law of the eminent Mr. Merdle of worldwide renown, was made one of the Lords of the Circumlocution Office; and proclamation was issued, to all true believers, that this admirable *appointment was to be hailed as a graceful and gracious mark of homage, rendered by the graceful and gracious Decimus, to that commercial interest which must ever in a great commercial country – and all the rest of it, with blast of trumpet*. So, bolstered by this mark of Government homage, the *wonderful* Bank and all the other *wonderful* undertakings went on and went up; and gapers came to Harley Street, Cavendish Square, only to look at the house where the golden wonder lived. [Book 2, ch. 12]

Here, in the italicized portion, another's speech in another's (official-ceremonial) language is openly introduced as indirect discourse. But it is surrounded by the hidden, diffused speech of another (in the same official-ceremonial language) that clears the way for the introduction of a form more easily perceived *as* another's speech and that can reverberate more fully as such. The clearing of the way comes with the word 'Esquire', characteristic of official speech, added to Sparkler's name; the final confirmation that this is another's speech comes with the epithet 'wonderful'. This epithet does not of course belong to the author but to that same 'general opinion' that had created the commotion around Merdle's inflated enterprises.

(3) It was a dinner to provoke an appetite, though he had not had one. The rarest dishes, sumptuously cooked and sumptuously served; the choicest fruits, the most exquisite wines; marvels of workmanship in gold and silver, china and glass; innumerable things delicious to the senses of taste, smell, and sight, were insinuated into its composition. *O, what a wonderful man this Merdle, what a great man, what a master man, how blessedly and enviably endowed* – in one word, what a rich man! [Book 2, ch. 12]

The beginning is a parodic stylization of high epic style. What follows is an enthusiastic glorification of Merdle, a chorus of his admirers in the form of the concealed speech of another (the italicized portion). The whole point here is to expose the real basis for such glorification, which is to unmask the chorus' hypocrisy: 'wonderful', 'great', 'master', 'endowed' can all be replaced by the single word 'rich'. This act of authorial unmasking, which is openly accomplished within the boundaries of a single simple sentence, merges with the unmasking of another's speech. The ceremonial emphasis on glorification is complicated by a second emphasis that is indignant, ironic, and this is the one that ultimately predominates in the final unmasking words of the sentence.

We have before us a typical double-accented, double-styled *hybrid construction*.

What we are calling a hybrid construction is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages', two semantic and axiological belief systems. We repeat, there is no formal – compositional and syntactic – boundary between these utterances, styles, languages, belief systems; the division of voices and languages

takes place within the limits of a single syntactic whole, often within the limits of a simple sentence. It frequently happens that even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems that intersect in a hybrid construction – and, consequently, the word has two contradictory meanings, two accents (examples below). As we shall see, hybrid constructions are of enormous significance in novel style.[2]

(4) But Mr. Tite Barnacle was a buttoned-up man, and *consequently* a weighty one. [Book 2, ch. 12]

The above sentence is an example of *pseudo-objective motivation*, one of the forms for concealing another's speech – in this example, the speech of 'current opinion'. If judged by the formal markers above, the logic motivating the sentence seems to belong to the author, i.e., he is formally at one with it; but in actual fact, the motivation lies within the subjective belief system of his characters, or of general opinion.

Pseudo-objective motivation is generally characteristic of novel style,[3] since it is one of the manifold forms for concealing another's speech in hybrid constructions. Subordinate conjunctions and link words ('thus', 'because', 'for the reason that', 'in spite of' and so forth), as well as words used to maintain a logical sequence ('therefore', 'consequently', etc.) lose their direct authorial intention, take on the flavor of someone else's language, become refracted or even completely reified.

Such motivation is especially characteristic of comic style, in which someone else's speech is dominant (the speech of concrete persons, or, more often, a collective voice).[4]

(5) As a vast fire will fill the air to a great distance with its roar, so the sacred flame which the mighty Barnacles had fanned caused the air to resound more and more with the name of Merdle. It was deposited on every lip, and carried into every ear. There never was, there never had been, there never again should be, such a man as Mr. Merdle. Nobody, as aforesaid, knew what he had done; but *everybody knew him to be the greatest that had appeared*. [Book 2, ch. 13]

Here we have an epic, 'Homeric' introduction (parodic, of course) into whose frame the crowd's glorification of Merdle has been inserted (concealed speech of another in another's language). We then get direct authorial discourse; however, the author gives an objective tone to this 'aside' by suggesting that 'everybody knew' (the italicized portion). It is as if even the author himself did not doubt the fact.

(6) That illustrious man and great national ornament, Mr. Merdle, continued his shining course. It began to be widely understood that one who had done society the admirable service *of making so much money out of it,* could not be suffered to remain a commoner. A baronetcy was spoken of with confidence; a peerage was frequently mentioned. [Book 2, ch. 24]

We have here the same fictive solidarity with the hypocritically ceremonial general opinion of Merdle. All the epithets referring to Merdle in the first sentences derive from general opinion, that is, they are the concealed speech of another. The second sentence – 'it began to be widely understood', etc. – is kept within the bounds of an emphatically objective style, representing not subjective opinion but the admission of an objective and completely indisputable fact. The epithet 'who had done society the admirable service' is completely at the level of common opinion, repeating its official glorification, but the subordinate clause attached to that glorification ('of making so much money out of it') are the words of the author himself (as if put in parentheses in the quotation). The main sentence then picks up again at the level of common opinion. We have here a typical hybrid construction, where the subordinate clause is in direct authorial speech and

the main clause in someone else's speech. The main and subordinate clauses are constructed in different semantic and axiological conceptual systems.

The whole of this portion of the novel's action, which centers around Merdle and the persons associated with him, is depicted in the language (or more accurately, the languages) of hypocritically ceremonial common opinion about Merdle, and at the same time there is a parodic stylization of that everyday language of banal society gossip, or of the ceremonial language of official pronouncements and banquet speeches, or the high epic style or Biblical style. This atmosphere around Merdle, the common opinion about him and his enterprises, infects the positive heroes of the novel as well, in particular the sober Pancks, and forces him to invest his entire estate – his own, and Little Dorrit's – in Merdle's hollow enterprises.

(7) Physician had engaged to break the intelligence in Harley Street. Bar could not at once return to his inveiglements of the most enlightened and remarkable jury he had ever seen in that box, with whom, he could tell his learned friend, no shallow sophistry would go down, and no unhappily abused professional tact and skill prevail (this was the way he meant to begin with them); so he said he would go too, and would loiter to and fro near the house while his friend was inside. [Book 2, ch. 25, mistakenly given as ch. 15 in Russian text, Tr.]

Here we have a clear example of hybrid construction where within the frame of authorial speech (informative speech) – the beginning of a speech prepared by the lawyer has been inserted, 'The Bar could not at once return to his inveiglements … of the jury … so he said he would go too. …' etc. – while this speech is simultaneously a fully developed epithet attached to the subject of the author's speech, that is, 'jury'. The word 'jury' enters into the context of informative authorial speech (in the capacity of a necessary object to the word 'inveiglements') as well as into the context of the parodic-stylized speech of the lawyer. The author's word 'inveiglement' itself emphasizes the parodic nature of the re-processing of the lawyer's speech, the hypocritical meaning of which consists precisely in the fact that it would be impossible to inveigle such a remarkable jury.

(8) It followed that Mrs. Merdle, as a woman of fashion and good breeding *who had been sacrificed to wiles of a vulgar barbarian* (for Mr. Merdle was found out from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, the moment he was found out in his pocket), must be actively championed by her order for her order's sake. [Book 2, ch. 33]

This is an analogous hybrid construction, in which the definition provided by the general opinion of society – 'a sacrifice to the wiles of a vulgar barbarian' – merges with authorial speech, exposing the hypocrisy and greed of common opinion.

So it is throughout Dickens' whole novel. His entire text is, in fact, everywhere dotted with quotation marks that serve to separate out little islands of scattered direct speech and purely authorial speech, washed by heteroglot waves from all sides. But it would have been impossible actually to insert such marks, since, as we have seen, one and the same word often figures both as the speech of the author and as the speech of another – and at the same time.

Another's speech – whether as storytelling, as mimicking, as the display of a thing in light of a particular point of view, as a speech deployed first in compact masses, then loosely scattered, a speech that is in most cases impersonal ('common opinion', professional and generic languages) – is at none of these points clearly separated from authorial speech: the boundaries are deliberately flexible and ambiguous, often passing through a single syntactic whole, often through a simple sentence, and sometimes even dividing up the main parts of a sentence. This varied *play with the boundaries of speech types*, languages and belief systems is one [of the] most fundamental aspects of comic style.

Comic style (of the English sort) is based, therefore, on the stratification of common language and on the possibilities available for isolating from these strata, to one degree or another, one's own intentions, without ever completely merging with them. *It is precisely the diversity of speech, and not the unity of a normative shared language, that is the ground of style*. It is true that such speech diversity does not exceed the boundaries of literary language conceived as a linguistic whole (that is, language defined by abstract linguistic markers), does not pass into an authentic heteroglossia and is based on an abstract notion of language as unitary (that is, it does not require knowledge of various dialects or languages). However a mere concern for language is but the abstract side of the concrete and active (i.e., dialogically engaged) understanding of the living heteroglossia that has been introduced into the novel and artistically organized within it.

In Dickens' predecessors, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne, the men who founded the English comic novel, we find the same parodic stylization of various levels and genres of literary language, but the distance between these levels and genres is greater than it is in Dickens and the exaggeration is stronger (especially in Sterne). The parodic and objectivized incorporation into their work of various types of literary language (especially in Sterne) penetrates the deepest levels of literary and ideological thought itself, resulting in a parody of the logical and expressive structure of any ideological discourse as such (scholarly, moral and rhetorical, poetic) that is almost as radical as the parody we find in Rabelais.

Literary parody understood in the narrow sense plays a fundamental role in the way language is structured in Fielding, Smollett and Sterne (the Richardsonian novel is parodied by the first two, and almost all contemporary novel-types are parodied by Sterne). Literary parody serves to distance the author still further from language, to complicate still further his relationship to the literary language of his time, especially in the novel's own territory. The novelistic discourse dominating a given epoch is itself turned into an object and itself becomes a means for refracting new authorial intentions.

Literary parody of dominant novel-types plays a large role in the history of the European novel. One could even say that the most important novelistic models and novel-types arose precisely during this parodic destruction of preceding novelistic worlds. This is true of the work of Cervantes, Mendoza, Grimmelshausen, Rabelais, Lesage and many others.

In Rabelais, whose influence on all novelistic prose (and in particular the comic novel) was very great, a parodic attitude toward almost all forms of ideological discourse – philosophical, moral, scholarly, rhetorical, poetic and in particular the pathos-charged forms of discourse (in Rabelais, pathos almost always is equivalent to lie) – was intensified to the point where it became a parody of the very act of conceptualizing anything in language. We might add that Rabelais taunts the deceptive human word by a parodic destruction of syntactic structures, thereby reducing to absurdity some of the logical and expressively accented aspects of words (for example, predication, explanations and so forth). Turning away from language (by means of language, of course), discrediting any direct or unmediated intentionality and expressive excess (any 'weighty' seriousness) that might adhere in ideological discourse, presuming that all language is conventional and false, maliciously inadequate to reality – all this achieves in Rabelais almost the maximum purity possible in prose. But the truth that might oppose such falsity receives almost no direct intentional and verbal expression in Rabelais, it does not receive its *own* word – it reverberates only in the parodic and unmasking accents in which the lie is present. Truth is restored by reducing the lie to an absurdity, but truth itself does not seek words; she is afraid to entangle herself in the word, to soil herself in verbal pathos.

Rabelais' 'philosophy of the word' – a philosophy expressed not as much in direct utterances as in stylistic practice – has had enormous influence on all consequent novel prose and in particular of the great representative forms of the comic novel; with that in mind we bring

forward the purely Rabelaisian formulation of Sterne's Yorick, which might serve as an epigraph to the history of the most important stylistic lines of development in the European novel:

> For aught I know there might be some mixture of unlucky wit at the bottom of such Fracas: – For, to speak the truth, Yorick had an invincible dislike and opposition in his nature to gravity; – not to gravity as such; – for where gravity was wanted, he would be the most grave or serious of mortal men for days and weeks together; – but he was an enemy to the affectation of it, and declared open war against it, only as it appeared a cloak for ignorance, or for folly; and then, whenever it fell his way, however sheltered and protected, he seldom gave it much quarter.
>
> Sometimes, in his wild way of talking, he would say, That gravity was an errant scoundrel; and he would add, – of the most dangerous kind too, – because a sly one; and that, he verily believed, more honest, well-meaning people were bubbled out of their goods and money by it in one twelve-month, than by pocket-picking and shop-lifting in seven. In the naked temper which a merry heart discovered, he would say, There was no danger, – but to itself: – whereas the very essence of gravity was design, and consequently deceit; – 'twas a taught trick to gain credit of the world for more sense and knowledge than a man was worth; and that, with all its pretensions, – it was no better, but often worse, than what a French wit had long ago defined it, – viz. A mysterious carriage of the body to cover the defects of the mind; – which definition of gravity, Yorick, with great imprudence, would say, deserved to be wrote in letters of gold. [Bakhtin does not locate citation; it is from Tristram Shandy, vol. 1, ch. 11, Tr.]

Close to Rabelais, but in certain respects even exceeding him in the decisive influence he had on all of novelistic prose, is Cervantes. The English comic novel is permeated through and through with the spirit of Cervantes. It is no accident that this same Yorick, on his deathbed, quotes the words of Sancho Panza.

While the attitude toward language and toward its stratification (generic, professional and otherwise) among the German comic writers, in Hippel and especially in Jean Paul, is basically of the Sternean type, it is raised – as it is in Sterne himself – to the level of a purely philosophical problem, the very possibility of literary and ideological speech as such. The philosophical and ideological element in an author's attitude toward his own language forces into the background the play between intention and the concrete, primarily generic and ideological levels of literary language (cf. the reflection of just this in the aesthetic theories of Jean Paul).[5]

Thus the stratification of literary language, its speech diversity, is an indispensable prerequisite for comic style, whose elements are projected onto different linguistic planes while at the same time the intention of the author, refracted as it passes through these planes, does not wholly give itself up to any of them. It is as if the author has no language of his own, but does possess his own style, his own organic and unitary law governing the way he plays with languages and the way his own real semantic and expressive intentions are refracted within them. Of course this play with languages (and frequently the complete absence of a direct discourse of his own) in no sense degrades the general, deep-seated intentionality, the overarching ideological conceptualization of the work as a whole.

In the comic novel, the incorporation of heteroglossia and its stylistic utilization is characterized by two distinctive features:

(1) Incorporated into the novel are a multiplicity of 'language' and verbal-ideological belief systems – generic, professional, class-and-interest-group (the language of the nobleman, the farmer, the merchant, the peasant); tendentious, everyday (the languages of rumor, of society

chatter, servants' language) and so forth, but these languages are, it is true, kept primarily within the limits of the literary written and conversational language; at the same time these languages are not, in most cases, consolidated into fixed persons (heroes, storytellers) but rather are incorporated in an impersonal form 'from the author', alternating (while ignoring precise formal boundaries) with direct authorial discourse.

(2) The incorporated languages and socio-ideological belief systems, while of course utilized to refract the author's intentions, are unmasked and destroyed as something false, hypocritical, greedy, limited, narrowly rationalistic, inadequate to reality. In most cases these languages – already fully formed, officially recognized, reigning languages that are authoritative and reactionary – are (in real life) doomed to death and displacement. Therefore what predominates in the novel are various forms and degrees of *parodic stylization* of incorporated languages, a stylization that, in the most radical, most Rabelaisian[6] representatives of this novel-type (Sterne and Jean Paul), verges on a rejection of any straightforward and unmediated seriousness (true seriousness is the destruction of all false seriousness, not only in its pathos-charged expression but in its Sentimental one as well);[7] that is, it limits itself to a principled criticism of the word as such.

There is a fundamental difference between this comic form for incorporating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel and other forms that are defined by their use of a personified and concretely posited author (written speech) or teller (oral speech).

Play with a posited author is also characteristic of the comic novel (Sterne, Hippel, Jean Paul), a heritage from *Don Quixote*. But in these examples such play is purely a compositional device, which strengthens the general trend toward relativity, objectification and the parodying of literary forms and genres.

The posited author and teller assume a completely different significance where they are incorporated as carriers of a particular verbal-ideological linguistic belief system, with a particular point of view on the world and its events, with particular value judgments and intonations – 'particular' both as regards the author, his real direct discourse, and also as regards 'normal' literary narrative and language.

This particularity, this distancing of the posited author or teller from the real author and from conventional literary expectations, may occur in differing degrees and may vary in its nature. But in every case a particular belief system belonging to someone else, a particular point of view on the world belonging to someone else, is used by the author because it is highly productive, that is, it is able on the one hand to show the object of representation in a new light (to reveal new sides or dimensions in it) and on the other hand to illuminate in a new way the 'expected' literary horizon, that horizon against which the particularities of the teller's tale are perceivable.

For example: Belkin was chosen (or better, created) by Pushkin because of his particular 'unpoetic' point of view on objects and plots that are traditionally poetic (the highly characteristic and calculated use of the *Romeo and Juliet* plot in 'Mistress into Maid' or the romantic 'Dances of Death' in 'The Coffinmaker'). Belkin, who is on the same level with those narrators-at-third-remove out of whose mouths he has taken his stories, is a 'prosaic' man, a man without a drop of poetic pathos. The successful 'prosaic' resolutions of the plots and the very means of the story's telling destroy any expectation of traditional poetic effects. The fruitfulness of the prosaic quality in Belkin's point of view consists in just this failure to understand poetic pathos.

Maxim Maximych in *A Hero of Our Time*, Rudy Panko, the narrators of 'Nose' and 'Overcoat', Dostoevsky's chroniclers, folkloric narrators and storytellers who are themselves characters in Melnikov-Pechersky and Mamin-Sibiryak, the folkloric and down-to-earth storytellers in Leskov, the character-narrators in populist literature and finally the narrators in Symbolist and

post-Symbolist prose (in Remizov, Zamyatin and others) – with all their widely differing forms of narration (oral and written), with all their differing narrative languages (literary, professional, social-and-special-interest-group language, everyday, slang, dialects and others) – everywhere, they recommend themselves as specific and limited verbal ideological points of view, belief systems, opposed to the literary expectations and points of view that constitute the background needed to perceive them; but these narrators are productive precisely *because* of this very limitedness and specificity.

The speech of such narrators is always *another's speech* (as regards the real or potential direct discourse of the author) and in *another's language* (i.e., insofar as it is a particular variant of the literary language that clashes with the language of the narrator).

Thus we have in this case 'nondirect speaking' – not *in* language but *through* language, through the linguistic medium of another – and consequently through a refraction of authorial intentions.

The author manifests himself and his point of view not only in his effect on the narrator, on his speech and his language (which are to one or another extent objectivized, objects of display) but also in his effect on the subject of the story – as a point of view that differs from the point of view of the narrator. Behind the narrator's story we read a second story, the author's story; he is the one who tells us how the narrator tells stories, and also tells us about the narrator himself. We acutely sense two levels at each moment in the story; one, the level of the narrator, a belief system filled with his objects, meanings and emotional expressions, and the other, the level of the author, who speaks (albeit in a refracted way) by means of this story and through this story. The narrator himself, with *his* own discourse, enters into this authorial belief system along with what is actually being told. We puzzle out the author's emphases that overlie the subject of the story, while we puzzle out the story itself and the figure of the narrator as he is revealed in the process of telling his tale. If one fails to sense this second level, the intentions and accents of the author himself, then one has failed to understand the work.

As we have said above, the narrator's story or the story of the posited author is structured against the background of normal literary language, the expected literary horizon. Every moment of the story has a conscious relationship with this normal language and its belief system, is in fact set against them, and set against them *dialogically*: one point of view opposed to another, one evaluation opposed to another, one accent opposed to another (i.e., they are not contrasted as two abstractly linguistic phenomena). This interaction, this dialogic tension between two languages and two belief systems, permits authorial intentions to be realized in such a way that we can acutely sense their presence at every point in the work. The author is not to be found in the language of the narrator, not in the normal literary language to which the story opposes itself (although a given story may be closer to a given language) – but rather, the author utilizes now one language, now another, in order to avoid giving himself up wholly to either of them; he makes use of this verbal give-and-take, this dialogue of languages at every point in his work, in order that he himself might remain as it were neutral with regard to language, a third party in a quarrel between two people (although he might be a *biased* third party).

All forms involving a narrator or a posited author signify to one degree or another by their presence the author's freedom from a unitary and singular language, a freedom connected with the relativity of literary and language systems; such forms open up the possibility of never having to define oneself in language, the possibility of translating one's own intentions from one linguistic system to another, of fusing 'the language of truth' with 'the language of the everyday', of saying 'I am me' in someone else's language, and in my own language, 'I am other'.

Such a refracting of authorial intentions takes place in all these forms (the narrator's tale, the tale of a posited author or that of one of the characters); it is therefore possible to have in them, as in the comic novel, a variety of different distances between distinct aspects of the narrator's

language and the author's language: the refraction may be at times greater, at times lesser, and in some aspects of language there may be an almost complete fusion of voices.

The next form for incorporating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel – a form that every novel without exception utilizes – is the language used by characters.

The language used by characters in the novel, how they speak, is verbally and semantically autonomous; each character's speech possesses its own belief system, since each is the speech of another in another's language; thus it may also refract authorial intentions and consequently may to a certain degree constitute a second language for the author. Moreover, the character speech almost always influences authorial speech (and sometimes powerfully so), sprinkling it with another's words (that is, the speech of a character perceived as the concealed speech of another) and in this way introducing into it stratification and speech diversity.

Thus even where there is no comic element, no parody, no irony and so forth, where there is no narrator, no posited author or narrating character, speech diversity and language stratification still serve as the basis for style in the novel. Even in those places where the author's voice seems at first glance to be unitary and consistent, direct and unmediatedly intentional, beneath that smooth single-languaged surface we can nevertheless uncover prose's three-dimensionality, its profound speech diversity, which enters the project of style and is its determining factor.

Thus the language and style of Turgenev's novels have the appearance of being single-languaged and pure. Even in Turgenev, however, this unitary language is very far from poetic absolutism. Substantial masses of this language are drawn into the battle between points of view, value judgments and emphases that the characters introduce into it; they are infected by mutually contradictory intentions and stratifications; words, sayings, expressions, definitions and epithets are scattered throughout it, infected with others' intentions with which the author is to some extent at odds, and through which his own personal intentions are refracted. We sense acutely the various distances between the author and various aspects of his language, which smack of the social universes and belief systems of others. We acutely sense in various aspects of his language varying degrees of the presence of the author and of his *most recent semantic instantiation*. In Turgenev, heteroglossia and language stratification serve as the most fundamental factors of style, and orchestrate an authorial truth of their own; the author's linguistic consciousness, his consciousness as a writer of prose, is thereby relativized.

In Turgenev, social heteroglossia enters the novel primarily in the direct speeches of his characters, in dialogues. But this heteroglossia, as we have said, is also diffused throughout the authorial speech that surrounds the characters, creating highly particularized *character zones* [*zony geroev*]. These zones are formed from the fragments of character speech [*polureč'*], from various forms for hidden transmission of someone else's word, from scattered words and sayings belonging to someone else's speech, from those invasions into authorial speech of others' expressive indicators (ellipsis, questions, exclamations). Such a character zone is the field of action for a character's voice, encroaching in one way or another upon the author's voice.

However – we repeat – in Turgenev, the novelistic orchestration of the theme is concentrated in direct dialogues; the characters do not create around themselves their own extensive or densely saturated zones, and in Turgenev fully developed, complex stylistic hybrids are relatively rare.

We pause here on several examples of diffuse heteroglossia in Turgenev.[8]

(1) His name is Nikolai Petrovich Kirsanov. Some ten miles from the coaching-inn stands a respectable little property of his consisting of a couple of hundred serfs – or five thousand acres, as he expresses it now that he has divided up his land and let it to the peasants, and started a 'farm'. [*Fathers and Sons*, ch. 1]

Here the new expressions, characteristic of the era and in the style of the liberals, are put in quotation marks or otherwise 'qualified'.

(2) He was secretly beginning to feel irritated. Bazarov's complete indifference exasperated his aristocratic nature. *This son of a medico was not only self-assured: he actually returned abrupt and reluctant answers, and there was a churlish, almost insolant note in his voice.* [*Fathers and Sons*, ch. 4]

The third sentence of this paragraph, while being a part of the author's speech if judged by its formal syntactic markers, is at the same time in its choice of expressions ('this son of a medico') and in its emotional and expressive structure the hidden speech of someone else (Pavel Petrovich).

(3) Pavel Petrovich sat down at the table. He was wearing an elegant suit cut in the English fashion, and a gay little fez graced his head. The fez and the carelessly knotted cravat carried a suggestion of the more free life in the country but the stiff collar of his shirt – not white, it is true, but striped *as is correct for morning wear* – stood up as inexorably as ever against his well-shaven chin. [*Fathers and Sons*, ch. 5]

This ironic characterization of Pavel Petrovich's morning attire is consistent with the tone of a gentleman, precisely in the style of Pavel Petrovich. The statement 'as is correct for morning wear' is not, of course, a simple authorial statement, but rather the norm of Pavel Petrovich's gentlemanly circle, conveyed ironically. One might with some justice put it in quotation marks. This is an example of a pseudo-objective underpinning.

(4) *Matvei Ilyich's suavity of demeanour was equalled only by his stately manner*. He had a gracious word for everyone – with an added shade of disgust in some cases and deference in others; he was gallant, 'un vrai chevalier français', to all the ladies, and was continually bursting into hearty resounding laughter, in which no one else took part, as befits a high official. [*Fathers and Sons*, ch. 14]

Here we have an analogous case of an ironic characterization given from the point of view of the high official himself. Such is the nature of this form of pseudo-objective underpinning: 'as befits a high official'.

(5) The following morning Nezhdanov betook himself to Sipyagin's town residence, and there, in a magnificent study, filled with furniture of a severe style, *in full harmony with the dignity of a liberal politician and modern gentleman*. … [*Virgin Soil*, ch. 4]

This is an analogous pseudo-objective construction.

(6) Semyon Petrovich was in the ministry of the Court, he had the title of a *kammeryunker*. *He was prevented by his patriotism from joining the diplomatic service*, for which he seemed destined by everything, his education, his knowledge of the world, his popularity with women, and his very appearance. … [*Virgin Soil*, ch. 5] [9]

The motivation for refusing a diplomatic career is pseudo-objective. The entire characterization is consistent in tone and given from the point of view of Kallomyetsev himself, fused with his direct

speech, being – at least judging by its syntactic markers – a subordinate clause attached to authorial speech ('for which he seemed destined by everything … mais quitter la Russie!' and so forth).

(7) Kallomyetsev had come to S—— Province on a two months' leave to look after his property, that is to say, 'to scare some and squeeze others'. *Of course, there's no doing anything without that*. [*Virgin Soil*, ch. 5]

The conclusion of the paragraph is a characteristic example of a pseudo-objective statement. Precisely in order to give it the appearance of an objective authorial judgment, it is not put in quotation marks, as are the preceding words of Kallomyetsev himself; it is incorporated into authorial speech and deliberately placed directly after Kallomyetsev's own words.

(8) But Kallomyetsev deliberately stuck his round eyeglass between his nose and his eyebrow, and stared at the [snit of a] *student who dared not share* his 'apprehensions'. [*Virgin Soil*, ch. 7]

This is a typical hybrid construction. Not only the subordinate clause but also the direct object ('the [snit of a] student') of the main authorial sentence is rendered in Kallomyetsev's tone. The choice of words ('snit of a student', 'dared not share') are determined by Kallomyetsev's irritated intonation, and at the same time, in the context of authorial speech, these words are permeated with the ironic intonation of the author; therefore the construction has two accents (the author's ironic transmission, and a mimicking of the irritation of the character).

Finally, we adduce examples of an intrusion of the emotional aspects of someone else's speech into the syntactic system of authorial speech (ellipsis, questions, exclamations).

(9) Strange was the state of his mind. In the last two days so many new sensations, new faces. … For the first time in his life he had come close to a girl, whom, in all probability, he loved; he was present at the beginning of the thing to which, in all probability, all his energies were consecrated. … Well? was he rejoicing? No. Was he wavering, afraid, confused? Oh, certainly not. Was he at least, feeling that tension of his whole being, that impulse forward into the front ranks of the battle, to be expected as the struggle grew near? No again. Did he believe, then, in this cause? Did he believe in his own love? 'Oh, damned artistic temperament! sceptic!' his lips murmured inaudibly. Why this weariness, this disinclination to speak even, without shrieking and raving? What inner voice did he want to stifle with those ravings? [*Virgin Soil*, ch. 18]

Here we have, in essence, a form of a character's quasi-direct discourse [*nesobstvenno-prjamaja reč'*]. Judging by its syntactic markers, it is authorial speech, but its entire emotional structure belongs to Nezhdanov. This is his inner speech, but transmitted in a way regulated by the author, *with provocative questions from the author and with ironically debunking reservations* ('in all probability'), although Nezhdanov's emotional overtones are preserved.

Such a form for transmitting inner speech is common in Turgenev (and is generally one of the most widespread forms for transmitting inner speech in the novel). This form introduces order and stylistic symmetry into the disorderly and impetuous flow of a character's internal speech (a disorder and impetuosity would otherwise have to be re-processed into direct speech) and, moreover, through its syntactic (third-person) and basic stylistic markers (lexicological and other), such a form permits another's inner speech to merge, in an organic and structured way, with a context belonging to the author. But at the same time it is precisely this form that permits us to preserve the expressive structure of the character's inner speech, its inability to

exhaust itself in words, its flexibility, which would be absolutely impossible within the dry and logical form of indirect discourse [*kosvennaja reč'*]. Precisely these features make this form the most convenient for transmitting the inner speech of characters. It is of course a hybrid form, for the author's voice may be present in varying degrees of activity and may introduce into the transmitted speech a second accent of its own (ironic, irritated and so on).

The same hybridization, mixing of accents and erasing of boundaries between authorial speech and the speech of others is also present in other forms for transmitting characters' speech. With only three templates for speech transcription (direct speech [*prjamaja reč'*], indirect speech [*kosvennaja reč'*] and quasi-direct speech [*nesobstvenno-prjamaja reč'*]) a great diversity is nevertheless made possible in the treatment of character speech – i.e., the way characters overlap and infect each other – the main thing being how the authorial context succeeds in exploiting the various means for replicating frames and re-stratifying them.

The examples we have offered from Turgenev provide a typical picture of the character's role in stratifying the language of the novel and incorporating heteroglossia into it. A character in a novel always has, as we have said, a zone of his own, his own sphere of influence on the authorial context surrounding him, a sphere that extends – and often quite far – beyond the boundaries of the direct discourse allotted to him. The area occupied by an important character's voice must in any event be broader than his direct and 'actual' words. This zone surrounding the important characters of the novel is stylistically profoundly idiosyncratic: the most varied hybrid constructions hold sway in it, and it is always, to one degree or another, dialogized; inside this area a dialogue is played out between the author and his characters – not a dramatic dialogue broken up into statement-and-response, but that special type of novelistic dialogue that realizes itself within the boundaries of constructions that externally resemble monologues. The potential for such dialogue is one of the most fundamental privileges of novelistic prose, a privilege available neither to dramatic nor to purely poetic genres.

Character zones are a most interesting object of study for stylistic and linguistic analysis: in them one encounters constructions that cast a completely new light on problems of syntax and stylistics.

Let us pause finally on one of the most basic and fundamental forms for incorporating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel – 'incorporated genres'.

The novel permits the incorporation of various genres, both artistic (inserted short stories, lyrical songs, poems, dramatic scenes, etc.) and extra-artistic (everyday, rhetorical, scholarly, religious genres and others). In principle, any genre could be included in the construction of the novel, and in fact it is difficult to find any genres that have not at some point been incorporated into a novel by someone. Such incorporated genres usually preserve within the novel their own structural integrity and independence, as well as their own linguistic and stylistic peculiarities.

There exists in addition a special group of genres that play an especially significant role in structuring novels, sometimes by themselves even directly determining the structure of a novel as a whole – thus creating novel-types named after such genres. Examples of such genres would be the confession, the diary, travel notes, biography, the personal letter and several others. All these genres may not only enter the novel as one of its essential structural components, but may also determine the form of the novel as a whole (the novel-confession, the novel-diary, the novel-in-letters, etc.). Each of these genres possesses its own verbal and semantic forms for assimilating various aspects of reality. The novel, indeed, utilizes these genres precisely because of their capacity, as well-worked-out forms, to assimilate reality in words.

So great is the role played by these genres that are incorporated into novels that it might seem as if the novel is denied any primary means for verbally appropriating reality, that it has no approach of its own, and therefore requires the help of other genres to re-process reality; the novel itself has the appearance of being merely a secondary syncretic unification of other seemingly primary verbal genres.

All these genres, as they enter the novel, bring into it their own languages, and therefore stratify the linguistic unity of the novel and further intensify its speech diversity in fresh ways. It often happens that the language of a nonartistic genre (say, the epistolary), when introduced into the novel, takes on a significance that creates a chapter not only in the history of the novel, but in the history of literary language as well.

The languages thus introduced into a novel may be either directly intentional or treated completely as objects, that is, deprived of any authorial intentions – not as a word that has been spoken, but as a word to be displayed, like a thing. But more often than not, these languages do refract, to one degree or another, authorial intentions – although separate aspects of them may in various ways *not* coincide with the semantic operation of the work that immediately precedes their appearance.

Thus poetic genres of verse (the lyrical genres, for example) when introduced into the novel may have the direct intentionality, the full semantic charge, of poetry. Such, for example, are the verses Goethe introduced into *Wilhelm Meister*. In such a way did the Romantics incorporate their own verses into their prose – and, as is well known, the Romantics considered the presence of verses in the novel (verses taken as directly intentional expressions of the author) one of its constitutive features. In other examples, incorporated verses refract authorial intentions; for example, Lensky's poem in *Evgenij Onegin*, 'Where, o where have you gone....'. Although the verses from *Wilhelm Meister* may be directly attributed to Goethe (which is actually done), then 'Where, o where have you gone....' can in no way be attributed to Pushkin, or if so, only as a poem belonging to a special group comprising 'parodic stylizations' (where we must also locate Grinev's poem in *The Captain's Daughter*). Finally, poems incorporated into a novel can also be completely objectified, as are, for example, Captain Lebyadkin's verses in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*.

A similar situation is the novel's incorporation of every possible kind of maxim and aphorism; they too may oscillate between the purely objective (the 'word on display') and the directly intentional, that is, the fully conceptualized philosophical dicta of the author himself (unconditional discourse spoken with no qualifications or distancing). Thus we find, in the novels of Jean Paul – which are so rich in aphorisms – a broad scale of gradations between the various aphorisms, from purely objective to directly intentional, with the author's intentions refracted in varying degrees in each case.

In *Evgenij Onegin* aphorisms and maxims are present either on the plane of parody or of irony – that is, authorial intentions in these dicta are to a greater or lesser extent refracted. For example, the maxim

> He who has lived and thought can never
> Look on mankind without disdain;
> He who has felt is haunted ever
> By days that will not come again;
> No more for him enchantments semblance,
> On him the serpent of remembrance
> Feeds, and remorse corrodes his heart.[10]

is given us on a lighthearted, parodic plane, although one can still feel throughout a close proximity, almost a fusion with authorial intentions. And yet the lines that immediately follow:

> All this is likely to impart
> An added charm to conversation

(a conversation of the posited author with Onegin) strengthen the parodic-ironic emphasis, make the maxim more of an inert thing. We sense that the maxim is constructed in a field of activity dominated by Onegin's voice, in his – Onegin's – belief system, with his – Onegin's – emphases.

But this refraction of authorial intentions, in the field that resounds with Onegin's voice, in Onegin's zone – is different than the refraction in, say, Lensky's zone (cf. the almost objective parody on his poems).

This example may also serve to illustrate the influence of a character's language on authorial speech, something discussed by us above: the aphorism in question here is permeated with Onegin's (fashionably Byronic) intentions, therefore the author maintains a certain distance and does not completely merge with him.

The question of incorporating those genres fundamental to the novel's development (the confession, the diary and others) is much more complicated. Such genres also introduce into the novel their own languages, of course, but these languages are primarily significant for making available points of view that are generative in a material sense, since they exist outside literary conventionality and thus have the capacity to broaden the horizon of language available to literature, helping to win for literature new worlds of verbal perception, worlds that had been already sought and partially subdued in other – extraliterary – spheres of linguistic life.

A comic playing with languages, a story 'not from the author' (but from a narrator, posited author or character), character speech, character zones and lastly various introductory or framing genres are the basic forms for incorporating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel. All these forms permit languages to be used in ways that are indirect, conditional, distanced. They all signify a relativizing of linguistic consciousness in the perception of language borders – borders created by history and society, and even the most fundamental borders (i.e., those between languages as such) – and permit expression of a feeling for the materiality of language that defines such a relativized consciousness. This relativizing of linguistic consciousness in no way requires a corresponding relativizing in the semantic intentions themselves: even within a prose linguistic consciousness, intentions themselves can be unconditional. But because the idea of a singular language (a sacrosanct, unconditional language) is foreign to prose, prosaic consciousness must orchestrate its *own* – even though unconditional – semantic intentions. Prose consciousness feels cramped when it is confined to only *one* out of a multitude of heteroglot languages, for one linguistic timbre is inadequate to it.

We have touched upon only those major forms typical of the most important variants of the European novel, but in themselves they do not, of course, exhaust all the possible means for incorporating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel. A combination of all these forms in separate given novels, and consequently in various generic types generated by these novels, is also possible. Of such a sort is the classic and purest model of the novel as genre – Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, which realizes in itself, in extraordinary depth and breadth, all the artistic possibilities of heteroglot and internally dialogized novelistic discourse.

Heteroglossia, once incorporated into the novel (whatever the forms for its incorporation), is *another's speech in another's language*, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way. Such speech constitutes a special type of *double-voiced discourse*. It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author. In such discourse there are two voices, two meanings and two expressions. And all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated, they – as it were – know about each other (just as two exchanges in a dialogue know of each other and are structured in this mutual knowledge of each other); it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other. Double-voiced discourse is always internally dialogized. Examples of

this would be comic, ironic or parodic discourse, the refracting discourse of a narrator, refracting discourse in the language of a character and finally the discourse of a whole incorporated genre – all these discourses are double-voiced and internally dialogized. A potential dialogue is embedded in them, one as yet unfolded, a concentrated dialogue of two voices, two world views, two languages.

Double-voiced, internally dialogized discourse is also possible, of course, in a language system that is hermetic, pure and unitary, a system alien to the linguistic relativism of prose consciousness; it follows that such discourse is also possible in the purely poetic genres. But in those systems there is no soil to nourish the development of such discourse in the slightest meaningful or essential way. Double-voiced discourse is very widespread in rhetorical genres, but even there – remaining as it does within the boundaries of a single language system – it is not fertilized by a deep-rooted connection with the forces of historical becoming that serve to stratify language, and therefore rhetorical genres are at best merely a distanced echo of this becoming, narrowed down to an individual polemic.

Such poetic and rhetorical double-voicedness, cut off from any process of linguistic stratification, may be adequately unfolded into an individual dialogue, into individual argument and conversation between two persons, even while the exchanges in the dialogue are immanent to a single unitary language: they may not be in agreement, they may even be opposed, but they are diverse neither in their speech nor in their language. Such double-voicing, remaining within the boundaries of a single hermetic and unitary language system, without any underlying fundamental socio-linguistic orchestration, may be only a stylistically secondary accompaniment to the dialogue and forms of polemic.[11] The internal bifurcation (double-voicing) of discourse, sufficient to a single and unitary language and to a consistently monologic style, can never be a fundamental form of discourse: it is merely a game, a tempest in a teapot.

The double-voicedness one finds in prose is of another sort altogether. There – on the rich soil of novelistic prose – double-voicedness draws its energy, its dialogized ambiguity, not from *individual* dissonances, misunderstandings or contradictions (however tragic, however firmly grounded in individual destinies);[12] in the novel, this double-voicedness sinks its roots deep into a fundamental, socio-linguistic speech diversity and multi-languagedness. True, even in the novel heteroglossia is by and large always personified, incarnated in individual human figures, with disagreements and oppositions individualized. But such oppositions of individual wills and minds are submerged in *social* heteroglossia, they are reconceptualized through it. Oppositions between individuals are only surface upheavals of the untamed elements in social heteroglossia, surface manifestations of those elements that play *on* such individual oppositions, make them contradictory, saturate their consciousness and discourses with a more fundamental speech diversity.

Therefore the internal dialogism of double-voiced prose discourse can never be exhausted thematically (just as the metaphoric energy of language can never be exhausted thematically); it can never be developed into the motivation or subject for a manifest dialogue, such as might fully embody, with no residue, the internally dialogic potential embedded in linguistic heteroglossia. The internal dialogism of authentic prose discourse, which grows organically out of a stratified and heteroglot language, cannot fundamentally be dramatized or dramatically resolved (brought to an authentic end); it cannot ultimately be fitted into the frame of any manifest dialogue, into the frame of a mere conversation between persons; it is not ultimately divisible into verbal exchanges possessing precisely marked boundaries.[13] This double-voicedness in prose is prefigured in language itself (in authentic metaphors, as well as in myth), in language as a social phenomenon that is becoming in history, socially stratified and weathered in this process of becoming.

The relativizing of linguistic consciousness, its crucial participation in the social multi- and vari-languagedness of evolving languages, the various wanderings of semantic and expressive intentions and the trajectory of this consciousness through various languages (languages that

are all equally well conceptualized and equally objective), the inevitable necessity for such a consciousness to speak indirectly, conditionally, in a refracted way – these are all indispensable prerequisites for an authentic double-voiced prose discourse. This double-voicedness makes its presence felt by the novelist in the living heteroglossia of language, and in the multi-languagedness surrounding and nourishing his own consciousness; it is not invented in superficial, isolated rhetorical polemics with another person.

If the novelist loses touch with this linguistic ground of prose style, if he is unable to attain the heights of a relativized, Galilean linguistic consciousness, if he is deaf to organic double-voicedness and to the internal dialogization of living and evolving discourse, then he will never comprehend, or even realize, the actual possibilities and tasks of the novel as a genre. He may, of course, create an artistic work that compositionally and thematically will be similar to a novel, will be 'made' exactly as a novel is made, but he will not thereby have created a novel. The style will always give him away. We will recognize the naively self-confident or obtusely stubborn unity of a smooth, pure single-voiced language (perhaps accompanied by a primitive, artificial, worked-up double-voicedness). We quickly sense that such an author finds it easy to purge his work of speech diversity: he simply does not listen to the fundamental heteroglossia inherent in actual language; he mistakes social overtones, which create the timbres of words, for irritating noises that it is his task to eliminate. The novel, when torn out of authentic linguistic speech diversity, emerges in most cases as a 'closet drama', with detailed, fully developed and 'artistically worked out' stage directions (it is, of course, bad drama). In such a novel, divested of its language diversity, authorial language inevitably ends up in the awkward and absurd position of the language of stage directions in plays.[14]

The double-voiced prose word has a double meaning. But the poetic word, in the narrow sense, also has a double, even a multiple, meaning. It is this that basically distinguishes it from the word as concept, or the word as term. The poetic word is a trope, requiring a precise feeling for the two meanings contained in it.

But no matter how one understands the interrelationship of meanings in a poetic symbol (a trope), this interrelationship is never of the dialogic sort; it is impossible under any conditions or at any time to imagine a trope (say, a metaphor) being unfolded into the two exchanges of a dialogue, that is, two meanings parceled out between two separate voices. For this reason the dual meaning (or multiple meaning) of the symbol never brings in its wake dual accents. On the contrary, one voice, a single-accent system, is fully sufficient to express poetic ambiguity. It is possible to interpret the interrelationships of different meanings in a symbol logically (as the relationship of a part or an individual to the whole, as for example a proper noun that has become a symbol, or the relationship of the concrete to the abstract and so on); one may grasp this relationship philosophically and ontologically, as a special kind of representational relationship, or as a relationship between essence and appearance and so forth, or one may shift into the foreground the emotional and evaluative dimension of such relationship – but all these types of relationships between various meanings do not and cannot go beyond the boundaries of the relationship between a word and its object, or the boundaries of various aspects in the object. The entire event is played out between the word and its object; all of the play of the poetic symbol is in that space. A symbol cannot presuppose any fundamental relationship to another's word, to another's voice. The polysemy of the poetic symbol presupposes the unity of a voice with which it is identical, and it presupposes that such a voice is completely alone within its own discourse. As soon as another's voice, another's accent, the possibility of another's point of view breaks through this play of the symbol, the poetic plane is destroyed and the symbol is translated onto the plane of prose.

To understand the difference between ambiguity in poetry and double-voicedness in prose, it is sufficient to take any symbol and give it an ironic accent (in a correspondingly appropriate context, of course), that is, to introduce into it one's own voice, to refract within it one's own fresh intention.[15] In this process the poetic symbol – while remaining, of course, a symbol – is at one and the same time translated onto the plane of prose and becomes a double-voiced word: in

the space between the word and its object another's word, another's accent intrudes, a mantle of materiality is cast over the symbol (an operation of this sort would naturally result in a rather simple and primitive double-voiced structure).

An example of this simplest type of prosification of the poetic symbol in *Evgenij Onegin* is the stanza on Lensky:

> Of love he [Lensky] sang, love's service choosing,
> And timid was his simple tune
> As ever artless maiden's musing,
> As babes aslumber, as the moon....[16]

The poetic symbols of this stanza are organized simultaneously at two levels: the level of Lensky's lyrics themselves – in the semantic and expressive system of the 'Göttigen Geist' – and on the level of Pushkin's speech, for whom the 'Göttigen Geist' with its language and its poetics is merely an instantiation of the literary heteroglossia of the epoch, but one that is already becoming typical: a fresh tone, a fresh voice amid the multiple voices of literary language, literary world views and the life these world views regulate. Some other voices in this heteroglossia – of literature and of the real life contemporaneous with it – would be Onegin's Byronic-Chateaubriandesque language, the Richardsonian language and world of the provincial Tatiana, the down-to-earth rustic language spoken at the Larins' estate, the language and the world of Tatiana in Petersburg and other languages as well – including the indirect languages of the author – which undergo change in the course of the work. The whole of this heteroglossia (*Evgenij Onegin* is an encyclopedia of the styles and languages of the epoch) orchestrates the intentions of the author and is responsible for the authentically novelistic style of this work.

Thus the images in the above-cited stanza, being ambiguous (metaphorical) poetic symbols serving Lensky's intentions in Lensky's belief system, become double-voiced prose symbols in the system of Pushkin's speech. These are, of course, authentic prose symbols, arising from the heteroglossia inherent in the epoch's evolving literary language, not a superficial, rhetorical parody or irony.

Such is the distinction between true double-voicedness in fictive practice, and the *single-voiced* double or multiple meaning that finds expression in the purely poetic symbol. The ambiguity of double-voiced discourse is internally dialogized, fraught with dialogue, and may in fact even give birth to dialogues comprised of truly separate voices (but such dialogues are not dramatic; they are, rather, interminable prose dialogues). What is more, double-voicedness is never exhausted in these dialogues, it cannot be extracted fully from the discourse – not by a rational, logical counting of the individual parts, nor by drawing distinctions between the various parts of a monologic unit of discourse (as happens in rhetoric), nor by a definite cut-off between the verbal exchanges of a finite dialogue, such as occurs in the theater. Authentic double-voicedness, although it generates novelistic prose dialogues, is not exhausted in these dialogues and remains in the discourse, in language, like a spring of dialogism that never runs dry – for the internal dialogism of discourse is something that inevitably accompanies the social, contradictory historical becoming of language.

If the central problem in poetic theory is the problem of the poetic symbol, then the central problem in prose theory is the problem of the double-voiced, internally dialogized word, in all its diverse types and variants.

For the novelist working in prose, the object is always entangled in someone else's discourse about it, it is already present with qualifications, an object of dispute that is conceptualized and evaluated variously, inseparable from the heteroglot social apperception of it. The novelist speaks of this 'already qualified world' in a language that is heteroglot and internally dialogized. Thus both object and language are revealed to the novelist in their historical dimension, in the

process of social and heteroglot becoming. For the novelist, there is no world outside his socio-heteroglot perception – and there is no language outside the heteroglot intentions that stratify that world. Therefore it is possible to have, even in the novel, that profound but unique unity of a language (or more precisely, of languages) with its own object, with its own world, unity of the sort one finds in poetry. Just as the poetic image seems to have been born out of language itself, to have sprung organically from it, to have been pre-formed in it, so also novelistic images seem to be grafted organically on to their own double-voiced language, pre-formed, as it were, within it, in the innards of the distinctive multi-speechedness organic to that language. In the novel, the 'already bespoke quality' [*ogovorennost'*] of the world is woven together with the 'already uttered' quality [*peregovorennost'*] of language, into the unitary event of the world's heteroglot becoming, in both social consciousness and language.

Even the poetic word (in the narrow sense) must break through to its object, penetrate the alien word in which the object is entangled; it also encounters heteroglot language and must break through in order to create a unity and a pure intentionality (which is neither given nor ready-made). But the trajectory of the poetic word toward its own object and toward the unity of language is a path along which the poetic word is continually encountering someone else's word, and each takes new bearings from the other; the records of the passage remain in the slag of the creative process, which is then cleared away (as scaffolding is cleared away once construction is finished), so that the finished work may rise as unitary speech, one co-extensive with its object, as if it were speech about an 'Edenic' world. This single-voiced purity and unqualified directness that intentions possess in poetic discourse so crafted is purchased at the price of a certain conventionality in poetic language.

If the art of poetry, as a utopian philosophy of genres, gives rise to the conception of a purely poetic, extrahistorical language, a language far removed from the petty rounds of everyday life, a language of the gods – then it must be said that the art of prose is close to a conception of languages as historically concrete and living things. The prose art presumes a deliberate feeling for the historical and social concreteness of living discourse, as well as its relativity, a feeling for its participation in historical becoming and in social struggle; it deals with discourse that is still warm from that struggle and hostility, as yet unresolved and still fraught with hostile intentions and accents; prose art finds discourse in this state and subjects it to the dynamic-unity of its own style.

Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist

Notes

1 *Editor's note*: 'Heteroglossia in the Novel' is a section from the essay 'Discourse in the Novel'. The first five paragraphs reproduced here are in fact from the previous section in the essay. I have included them because they provide, I think, a better introduction to the section on heteroglossia taken as an extract, in isolation. The section proper starts with the paragraph which begins: 'The compositional forms for appropriating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel…'.

2 For more detail on hybrid constructions and their significance, see ch. 4 of the present essay, 'Discourse in the Novel' in M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. C. Emson and M. Holquist, Austin: Unviersity of Texas Press, 1981.

3 Such a device is unthinkable in the epic.

4 Cf. the grotesque pseudo-objective motivations in Gogol.

5 Intellect as embodied in the forms and the methods of verbal and ideological thought (i.e., the linguistic horizon of normal human intellectual activity) becomes in Jean Paul something infinitely petty and ludicrous when seen in the light of 'reason'. His humor results from play with intellectual activity and its forms.

6 It is of course impossible in the strict sense to include Rabelais himself – either chronologically or in terms of his essential character – among the representatives of comic novelists.
7 Nevertheless sentimentality and 'high seriousness' is not completely eliminated (especially in Jean Paul).
8 Citations from *Fathers and Sons* are from: Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, tr. Rosemary Edmonds, London: Penguin, 1965.
9 Citations from *Virgin Soil* are from: Ivan Turgenev, *Virgin Soil*, tr. Constance Garnett, New York: Grove Press, n.d. Tr.
10 Citations from *Eugene Onegin* are from the Walter Arndt translatio, New York: Dutton, 1963, slightly modified to correspond with Bakhtin's remarks about particulars. Tr.
11 In neoclassicism, this double-voicing becomes crucial only in the low genres, especially in satire. Tr.
12 Within the limits of the world of poetry and a unitary language, everything important in such disagreements and contradictions can and must be laid out in a direct and pure dramatic dialogue.
13 The more consistent and unitary the language, the more acute, dramatic and 'finished' such exchanges generally are.
14 In his well-known works on the theory and technique of the novel, Spielhagen focuses on precisely such unnovelistic novels, and ignores precisely the kind of potential specific to the novel as a genre. As a theoretician Spielhagen was deaf to heteroglot language and to that which it specifically generates: double-voiced discourse.
15 Alexei Alexandrovich Karenin had the habit of avoiding certain words, and expressions connected with them. He made up double-voiced constructions outside any context, exclusively on the intonational plane: '"Well, yes, as you see, your devoted husband, as devoted as in the first year of marriage, is burning with impatience to see you," he said in his slow high-pitched voice and in the tone in which he almost always addressed her, a tone of derision for anyone who could really talk like that' (*Anna Karenina* [New York: Signet, 1961] part 1, ch. 30; translation by David Magarshack).
16 We offer an analysis of this example in the essay 'From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse' (cf. pp. 43–45 in Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*).

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Mikhail Bakhtin in English

The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship (with P.N. Medvedev; 1928), trans. A.J. Wherle, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.
Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (with V.N. Voloshinov; 1929), trans. L. Matejka and I.R. Titunik, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973.
Rabelais and his World (1965), trans. H. Iswolsky, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
The Dialogic Imagination (1975), ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. Original work published as *Voprosy literatury i estetiki* (*Problems of Literature and Aesthetics*).
The Bakhtin Reader, ed. P. Morris, London: Edward Arnold, 1994.

Further reading

Critical overviews of Bakhtin's philosophy are given by Clark and Holquist (1984) and Morris (1994). Collections of critical essays on different aspects of Bakhtin's thought are provided by Gardiner (2003) and Hirschkop and Shepherd (2001), with the focus of Hohne and Wussow's (1994) anthology being the implications of Bakhtin's philosophy for feminist literary theory. His aesthetic philosophy is explored by Bernard-Donals (1994), Haynes (2008), Hirschkop (1999), and Shepherd (1998), and his dialogism is assessed by Holquist (1990) and Todorov (1984).

Ives (2004) considers how Bakhtin's dialogism and other Marxist approaches to language inform Gramsci's thought.

M.F. Bernard-Donals, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Between Phenomenology and Marxism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
K. Clark and M. Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984.
M.E. Gardiner (ed.), *Mikhail Bakhtin* vols. I–IV, London: Sage, 2003.
D.J. Haynes, *Bakhtin and the Visual Arts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
K. Hirschkop, *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
K. Hirschkop and D. Shepherd (eds), *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, 2nd edn, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001.
K. Hohne and H. Wussow (eds), *A Dialogue of Voices: Feminist Literary Theory and Bakhtin*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.
M. Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*, London: Routledge, 1990.
P. Ives, *Gramsci's Politics of Language: Engaging the Bakhtin Circle and the Frankfurt School*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
P. Morris (ed.), *The Bakhtin Reader*, London: Edward Arnold, 1994.
D. Shepherd (ed.), *The Contexts of Bakhtin: Philosophy, Authorship, Aesthetics*, London: Routledge, 1998.
T. Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, trans. W. Godzich, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.

Chapter 16

JÜRGEN HABERMAS

INTRODUCTION

Critical theory's interest in the 'inner logic' of concepts whereby negation transforms itself into affirmation occupies the work of Jürgen Habermas (b. 1929), a leading figure within the Frankfurt School's 'second generation'. Our use of concepts, according to Habermas, is intertwined with modernity's compartmentalization of society into different interest or power groups, e.g. scientific, economic, administrative, cultural, and his writing remains committed to the possibility of consensus or reconciliation between these divisions. Whereas Adorno's and Marcuse's assessments of the dynamics of contradiction take their lead from Hegel, Habermas draws on Kant's transcendental philosophy and attributes the possibility of emancipation to the interrelationship of the different domains, in a fashion comparable to the aesthetic's mediation between morality and cognition in the *Critique of Judgment*. This thesis is based on the work of his colleague Albrecht Wellmer and discussed below in 'Modernity versus Postmodernity' (1980).

Another source of Habermas's Kantianism is the transcendental semantics of Karl-Otto Apel, prominent in (what is arguably) Habermas's principal work, the two-volume *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981). Here he introduces the concept of 'lifeworld': a concept of social interaction, comparable in its ontological ambition to Marx's 'species-being', but slanted more to the conditions which allow communication between groups to take place. Just as any experience, with Kant, presupposes an a priori determinative structure, so any act of communication, Habermas argues, presupposes certain shared conditions which enable both parties to recognize one another as interlocutors, and it is in the universality of these conditions, he declares, that the possibility of consensus lies.

His argument has attracted a lot of criticism, based mainly on the poststructuralist premise that the fundamentally differential nature of meaning precludes the possibility of there being a common, locatable ground for verbal exchange. However, in response, one might draw on the Gadamerian, hermeneutic tradition which, also in line with Kant, insists that there doesn't have to be a ground of correspondence, for the simple reason that experience is inherently differential anyway. On this account, difference is a necessary and enabling condition (as in, say, the difference between concept and intuition), rather than an incompatibility preventing contact.

Whereas poststructuralism and postmodernism assert that the categories of the Enlightenment are politically suspect for leaving certain forms of experience unacknowledged, Habermas stands by the emancipatory potential of the Enlightenment project. In 'Modernity versus Postmodernity', he considers the possibility that aesthetic modernity might reintegrate us with the lifeworld. The paper is the address he gave upon receiving the Theodor W. Adorno prize from the city of Frankfurt in 1980. Habermas's argument turns upon the 'inner logic' of the aesthetic resisting the divisive

specialization exercised by modernity as a whole and promoting social integration through the cross-referral of categories. Aesthetic modernity, in its most recent guise, Habermas suggests, is a condition of perceptual revolution: the modern 'is "the new" which will be overcome and made obsolete through the necessity of the next style'. The drive to find new, unexplored regions within a territory has its origins in the eighteenth century. Enlightenment thought consolidates the independence of human perception from the teachings of the Church first instituted in the Renaissance. Whereas the Renaissance is defined by renewed interest in pre-Christian and ancient Greek texts, the Enlightenment introduces a compartmentalization of knowledge – into science, morality, and art – on the understanding that truth consists in the careful scrutiny and rationalization of what is appropriate to each domain – an 'inner logic', as Habermas refers to it – and that the depth of knowledge generated by specialization would promote justice, moral progress, and the development of the self. However, this has not happened. Specialization has instead come to mean 'separation from the hermeneutics of everyday communication'. In art, since the middle of the nineteenth century, there has been the 'distinct consciousness of art for art's sake', and twentieth-century attempts to bring art and life together, e.g. Dada, the ready-made, conceptualism, have only served to deepen the Enlightenment's divisions.

'Postmodernity' in the essay title refers to the various neoconservative intellectual positions which, in recent decades, have either given up on modernity as a force for positive social change or have claimed it to be responsible for the alienating tendencies within society. However, Habermas urges us to learn from the mistakes of modernity and see it as a project not yet complete; the divisions imposed by specialization can be retrieved from their schema of alienation. Rather than contributing to the divisions which carve society into alienated sectors, the category of aesthetic modernity, Habermas declares, following Wellmer, can work towards social reintegration by being combined with other categories, for example, creating situations which allow art to relate to the layman and not just to the expert who works exclusively within art criticism. This turns the logic of the aesthetic against itself, transforming an act of division into an act of cross-referral, in keeping with Kant's situation of the aesthetic as that which stimulates moral reasoning and the construction of knowledge. The aesthetic experience 'not only renews the interpretation of our needs in whose light we perceive the world' but also affects 'our cognitive significations and our normative expectations and changes the manner in which all these moments refer to one another'.

The analysis of the 'inner logic' of concepts takes an interesting turn with Habermas. It is clear from 'Questions and Counter-Questions', his response to the various theorists who have commented upon his account of aesthetic modernity, that he sees Kant as a representative of the Enlightenment's strict demarcation of cognition, morality, and taste and not as an agent of reconciliation.[1] In other words, Habermas doesn't recognize that Kant underpins Wellmer's thesis of conceptual integration. While it is true that Kant's critical philosophy involves systematic division, e.g. sensibility and understanding, theoretical cognition and practical cognition, determinative judgment and reflective judgment, it takes a wilfully selective reading of the three *Critiques* not to appreciate that these divisions are in place as the foundations for a theory of interrelationship. It is an unavoidable feature of grammar that one can only assert the interaction between things by first referring to them individually as separate things. By not recognizing that the origins of Wellmer's thesis are Kantian, Habermas's own writing becomes a display of just how difficult it is to determine the point when the 'inner logic' of a concept transforms it from being the imposition of a boundary to being a principle of boundary-transcendence. Works of art, Habermas goes on to argue, give us 'the inner logical differentiation of special sorts of experience' and generate 'increased sensitivity to what remains unassimilated in the interpretive achievements of pragmatic, epistemic, and moral mastery of the demands and challenges of everyday situations'.[2]

This structure of mutual illumination is essentially metaphorical – two normally unrelated concepts combined to create a proposition which generates novel perspectives on both – and invites us to compare Habermas's hermeneutics of conceptual cross-fertilization with the phenomenological accounts of, say, Heidegger and Bachelard, and the ethical issues raised by poststructuralism's reliance on metaphor.

Note

1 J. Habermas, 'Questions and counter-questions', *Praxis International*, 1984, vol. 4, pp. 229–49.
2 Ibid., p. 236.

■ ■ ■

MODERNITY VERSUS POSTMODERNITY[1]

JÜRGEN HABERMAS

In 1980, architects were admitted to the Biennial in Venice, following painters and filmmakers. The note sounded at this first Architecture Biennial was one of disappointment. I would describe it by saying that those who exhibited in Venice formed an avant-garde of reversed fronts. I mean that they sacrificed the tradition of modernity in order to make room for a new historicism. Upon this occasion, a critic of the German newspaper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, advanced a thesis whose significance reaches beyond this particular event; it is a diagnosis of our times: 'Postmodernity definitely presents itself as Antimodernity.' This statement describes an emotional current of our times which has penetrated all spheres of intellectual life. It has placed on the agenda theories of post-enlightenment, postmodernity, even of posthistory.

From history we know the phrase:

'The Ancients and the Moderns'

Let me begin by defining these concepts. The term 'modern' has a long history, one which has been investigated by Hans Robert Jauss. The word 'modern' in its Latin form 'modernus' was used for the first time in the late fifth century in order to distinguish the present, which had become officially Christian, from the Roman and pagan past. With varying content, the term 'modern' again and again expresses the consciousness of an epoch that relates itself to the past of antiquity, in order to view itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new.

Some writers restrict this concept of 'modernity' to the Renaissance, but this is historically too narrow. People considered themselves modern during the period of Charles the Great, in the twelfth century, as well as in France of the late seventeenth century, at the time of the famous 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes.' This is to say, the term 'modern' appeared and reappeared exactly during those periods in Europe when the consciousness of a new epoch formed itself through a renewed relationship to the ancients – whenever, moreover, antiquity was considered a model to be recovered through some kind of imitation.

The spell which the classics of the ancient world cast upon the spirit of later times was first dissolved with the ideals of the French Enlightenment. Specifically, the idea of being 'modern' by looking back to the ancients changed with the belief, inspired by modern science, in the infinite progress of knowledge and in the infinite advance towards social and moral betterment. Another

form of modernist consciousness was formed in the wake of this change. The romantic modernist sought to oppose the antique ideals of the classicists; he looked for a new historical epoch, and found it in the idealized Middle Ages. However, this new ideal age, established early in the nineteenth century, did not remain a fixed ideal. In the course of the nineteenth century, there emerged out of this romantic spirit that radicalized consciousness of modernity which freed itself from all specific historical ties. This most recent modernism simply makes an abstract opposition between tradition and the present; and we are, in a way, still the contemporaries of that kind of aesthetic modernity which first appeared in the midst of the nineteenth century. Since then, the distinguishing mark of works, which count as modern, is the 'new.' The characteristic of such works is 'the new' which will be overcome and made obsolete through the novelty of the next style. But, while that which is merely 'stylish' will soon become out-moded, that which is modern preserves a secret tie to the classical. Of course, whatever can survive time has always been considered to be a classic. But the emphatically modern document no longer borrows this power of being a classic from the authority of a past epoch; instead, a modern work becomes a classic because it has once been authentically modern. Our sense of modernity creates its own self-enclosed canons of being classic. In this sense we speak, e.g., in view of the history of modern art, of classical modernity. The relation between 'modern' and 'classical' has definitely lost a fixed historical reference.

The discipline of aesthetic modernity

The spirit and discipline of aesthetic modernity assumed clear contours in the work of Baudelaire. Modernity then unfolded in various avant-garde movements, and finally reached its climax in the Café Voltaire of the Dadaists, and in Surrealism. Aesthetic modernity is characterized by attitudes which find a common focus in a changed consciousness of time. This time consciousness expresses itself through metaphors of the vanguard and the avant-garde. The avant-garde understands itself as invading unknown territory, exposing itself to the dangers of sudden, of shocking encounters, conquering an as yet unoccupied future. The avant-grade must find a direction in a landscape into which no one seems to have yet ventured.

But these forward gropings, this anticipation of an undefined future and the cult of the new, mean in fact the exaltation of the present. The new time consciousness, which enters philosophy in the writings of Bergson, does more than express the experience of mobility in society, acceleration in history, of discontinuity in everyday life. The new value placed on the transitory, the elusive, and the ephemeral, the very celebration of dynamism, discloses the longing for an undefiled, an immaculate and stable present.

This explains the rather abstract language in which the modernist temper has spoken of the 'past.' Individual epochs lose their distinct forces. Historical memory is replaced by the heroic affinity of the present with the extremes of history: a sense of time wherein decadence immediately recognizes itself in the barbaric, the wild and the primitive. We observe the anarchistic intention of blowing up the continuum of history, and we can account for it in terms of the subversive force of this new aesthetic consciousness. Modernity revolts against the normalizing functions of tradition; modernity lives on the experience of rebelling against all that is normative. This revolt is one way to neutralize the standards of both, morality and utility. This aesthetic consciousness continuously stages a dialectical play between secrecy and public scandal; it is addicted to the fascination of that horror which accompanies the act of profaning, and is yet always in flight from the trivial results of profanation.

On the other hand, the time consciousness articulated in avant-garde art is not simply ahistorical; it is directed against what might be called a false normativity in history. The modern, avant-garde spirit has sought, instead, to use the past in a different way; it disposes over those

pasts which have been made available by the objectifying scholarship of historicism, but it opposes at the same time a neutralized history, which is locked up in the museum of historicism.

Drawing upon the spirit of surrealism, Walter Benjamin constructs the relationship of modernity to history, in what I would call a post-historicist attitude. He reminds us of the self-understanding of the French Revolution: 'The Revolution cited ancient Rome, just as fashion cites an antiquated dress. Fashion has a scent for what is current, whenever this moves within the thicket of what was once.' This is Benjamin's concept of the *Jetztzeit*, of the present as a moment of revelation; a time, in which splinters of a messianic presence are enmeshed. In this sense, for Robespierre, the antique Rome was a past laden with momentary revelations.

Now, this spirit of aesthetic modernity has recently begun to age. It has been recited once more in the 1960s; after the 1970s, however, we must admit to ourselves that this modernism arouses a much fainter response today than it did fifteen years ago. Octavio Paz, a fellow traveller of modernity, noted already in the middle of the 1960s that 'the avant-garde of 1967 repeats the deeds and gestures of those of 1917. We are experiencing the end of the idea of modern art.' The work of Peter Bürger has since taught us to speak of 'post-avant-garde' art; this term is chosen to indicate the failure of the surrealist rebellion. But, what is the meaning of this failure? Does it signal a farewell to modernity? Thinking more generally, does the existence of a post-avant-garde mean there is a transition to that broader phenomenon called postmodernity?

This is in fact how Daniel Bell, the most brilliant of the American neoconservatives, interprets matters. In his book, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, Bell argues that the crises of the developed societies of the West are to be traced back to a split between culture and society. Modernist culture has come to penetrate the values of everyday life; the life-world is infected by modernism. Because of the forces of modernism, the principle of unlimited self-realization, the demand for authentic self-experience and the subjectivism of a hyperstimulated sensitivity have come to be dominant. This temperament unleashes hedonistic motives irreconcilable with the discipline of professional life in society, Bell says. Moreover, modernist culture is altogether incompatible with the moral basis of a purposive rational conduct of life. In this manner, Bell places the burden of responsibility for the dissolution of the Protestant ethic (a phenomenon which has already disturbed Max Weber), on the 'adversary culture.' Culture, in its modern form, stirs up hatred against the conventions and virtues of an everyday life, which has become rationalized under the pressures of economic and administrative imperatives.

I would call your attention to a complex wrinkle in this view. The impulse of modernity, we are told on the other hand, is exhausted; anyone who considers himself avant-garde can read his own death warrant. Although the avant-garde is still considered to be expanding, it is supposedly no longer creative. Modernism is dominant but dead. For the neoconservative, the question then arises: how can norms arise in society which will limit libertinism, reestablish the ethic of discipline and work? What new norms will put a brake on the leveling caused by the social welfare state, so that the virtues of individual competition for achievement can again dominate? Bell sees a religious revival to be the only solution. Religious faith tied to a faith in tradition will provide individuals with clearly defined identities, and with existential security.

Cultural modernity and societal modernization

One can certainly not conjure up by magic the compelling beliefs which command authority. Analyses like Bell's, therefore, only result in an attitude which is spreading in Germany no less than here in the States: an intellectual and political confrontation with the carriers of cultural modernity. I cite Peter Steinfells, an observer of the new style which the neoconservatives have imposed upon the intellectual scene in the 1970s.

> The struggles takes the form of exposing every manifestation of what could be considered an oppositionist mentality and tracing its 'logic' so as to link it to various forms of extremism: drawing the connection between modernism and nihilism … between government regulation and totalitarianism, between criticism of arms expenditures and subservience to communism, between Women's liberation or homosexual rights and the destruction of the family … between the Left generally and terrorism, anti-semitism, and fascism …[2]

The *ad hominem* approach and the bitterness of these intellectual accusations have also been trumpeted loudly in Germany. They should not be explained so much in terms of the psychology of neoconservative writers; rather, they are rooted in the analytical weaknesses of neoconservative doctrine itself.

Neoconservatism shifts onto cultural modernism the uncomfortable burdens of a more or less successful capitalist modernization of the economy and society. The neoconservative doctrine blurs the relationship between the welcomed process of societal modernization on the one hand, and the lamented cultural development on the other. The neoconservative does not uncover the economic and social causes for the altered attitudes towards work, consumption, achievement, and leisure. Consequently, he attributes all of the following – hedonism, the lack of social identification, the lack of obedience, narcissism, the withdrawal from status and achievement competition – to the domain of 'culture.' In fact, however, culture is intervening in the creation of all these problems in only a very indirect and mediated fashion.

In the neoconservative view, those intellectuals who still feel themselves committed to the project of modernity are then presented as taking the place of those unanalyzed causes. The mood which feeds neoconservatism today in no way originates from the discontents about the antinomian consequences of a culture breaking from the museums into the stream of ordinary life. These discontents have not been called into life by modernist intellectuals. They are rooted in deep seated reactions against the process of *societal* modernization. Under the pressures of the dynamics of economic growth and the organizational accomplishments of the state, this social modernization penetrates deeper and deeper into previous forms of human existence. I would describe this subordination of the life-worlds under the system's imperatives as a matter of disturbing the communicative infrastructure of everyday life.

Thus, for example, neo-populist protests only bring to expression in pointed fashion a widespread fear regarding the destruction of the urban and natural environment, and of forms of human sociability. There is a certain irony about these protests in terms of neoconservatism. The tasks of passing on a cultural tradition, of social integration, and of socialization require the adherence to a criterion of communicative rationality. The occasions for protest and discontent originate exactly when spheres of communicative action, centered on the reproduction and transmission of values and norms, are penetrated by a form of modernization guided by standards of economic and administrative rationality; however, those very spheres are dependent on quite different standards of rationalization – on the standards of what I would call communicative rationality. But, neoconservative doctrines turn our attention precisely away from such societal processes: they project the causes, which they do not bring to light, onto the plane of a subversive culture and its advocates.

To be sure, cultural modernity generates its own aporias as well. Independently from the consequences of *societal* modernization, and from *within the perspective* of *cultural* development itself, there originate motives for doubting the project of modernity. Having dealt with a feeble kind of criticism of modernity – that of neoconservatism – let me now move our discussion of modernity and its discontents into a different domain that touches on these aporias of cultural modernity, issues which often serve only as a pretense for those positions (which either call for a postmodernity, or recommend a return to some form of premodernity or which throw modernity radically overboard).

The project of Enlightenment

The idea of modernity is intimately tied to the development of European art; but what I call 'the project of modernity' comes only into focus when we dispense with the usual concentration upon art. Let me start a different analysis by recalling an idea from Max Weber. He characterized cultural modernity as the separation of the substantive reason expressed in religion and metaphysics into three autonomous spheres. They are: science, morality and art. These came to be differentiated because the unified world conceptions of religion and metaphysics fell apart. Since the eighteenth century, the problems inherited from these older world-views could be rearranged so as to fall under specific aspects of validity: truth, normative rightness, authenticity and beauty. They could then be handled as questions of knowledge, or of justice and morality, or of taste. Scientific discourse, theories of morality, jurisprudence, the production and criticism of art, could in turn be institutionalized. Each domain of culture could be made to correspond to cultural professions, in which problems could be dealt with as the concern of special experts. This professionalized treatment of the cultural tradition brings to the fore the intrinsic structures of each of the three dimensions of culture. There appear the structures of cognitive–instrumental, moral–practical, and of aesthetic–expressive rationality, each of these under the control of specialists who seem more adept at being logical in these particular ways than other people are. As a result, the distance has grown between the culture of the experts and that of the larger public. What accrues to culture through specialized treatment and reflexion does not immediately and necessarily become the property of everyday praxis. With cultural rationalization of this sort, the threat increases that the life-world, whose traditional substance has already been devalued, will become more and more impoverished.

The project of modernity formulated in the eighteenth century by the philosophers of the Enlightenment consisted in their efforts to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art, according to their inner logic. At the same time, this project intended to release the cognitive potentials of each of these domains to set them free from their esoteric forms. The Enlightenment philosophers wanted to utilize this accumulation of specialized culture for the enrichment of everyday life, that is to say, for the rational organization of everyday social life.

Enlightenment thinkers of the cast of mind of Condorcet still had the extravagant expectation that the arts and the sciences would promote not only the control of natural forces, but would also further understanding of the world and of the self, would promote moral progress, the justice of institutions, and even the happiness of human beings. The twentieth century has shattered this optimism. The differentiation of science, morality, and art has come to mean the autonomy of the segments treated by the specialist and at the same time letting them split off from the hermeneutics of everyday communication. This splitting off is the problem that has given rise to those efforts to 'negate' the culture of expertise. But the problem won't go away: should we try to hold on to the *intentions* of the Enlightenment, feeble as they may be, or should we declare the entire project of modernity a lost cause? I now want to return to the problem of artistic culture, having explained why, historically, that aesthetic modernity is a part only of cultural modernity in general.

The false programs of the negation of culture

Greatly oversimplifying, I would say in the history of modern art one can detect a trend toward ever greater autonomy in the definition and practice of art. The category of 'beauty' and the domain of beautiful objects were first constituted in the Renaissance. In the course of the eighteenth century, literature, the fine arts and music were institutionalized as activities independent from sacred and courtly life. Finally, around the middle of the nineteenth century

an aestheticist conception of art emerged, which encouraged the artist to produce his work according to the distinct consciousness of art for art's sake. The autonomy of the aesthetic sphere could then become a deliberate project: the talented artist could lend authentic expression to those experiences he had in encountering his own de-centered subjectivity, detached from the constraints of routinized cognition and everyday action.

In the mid-nineteenth century, in painting and literature, a movement began which Octavio Paz finds epitomized already in the art criticism of Baudelaire. Color, lines, sounds and movement ceased to serve primarily the cause of representation; the media of expression and the techniques of production themselves became the aesthetic object. Theodor W. Adorno could therefore begin his *Aesthetic Theory* with the following sentence: 'It is now taken for granted that nothing which concerns art can be taken for granted any more: neither art itself, nor art in its relationship to the whole, nor even the right of art to exist.' And this is what surrealism then denied: *das Existenzrecht der Kunst als Kunst*. To be sure, surrealism would not have challenged the right of art to exist, if modern art no longer had advanced a promise of happiness concerning its own relationship 'to the whole' of life. For Schiller, such a promise was delivered by aesthetic intuition, but not fulfilled by it. Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* speak to us of a utopia reaching beyond art itself. But by the time of Baudelaire, who repeated this *promesse de bonheur*, via art, the utopia of reconciliation with society had gone sour. A relation of opposites had come into being; art had become a critical mirror, showing the irreconcilable nature of the aesthetic and the social world. This modernist transformation was all the more painfully realized, the more art alienated itself from life and withdrew into the untouchableness of complete autonomy. Out of such emotional currents finally gathered those explosive energies which unloaded themselves in the surrealist attempt to blow up the autarkical sphere of art and to force a reconciliation of art and life.

But all those attempts to level art and life, fiction and praxis, appearance and reality to one plane; the attempts to remove the distinction between artifact and object of use, between conscious staging and spontaneous excitement; the attempts to declare everything to be art and everyone to be artist, to retract all criteria and to equate aesthetic judgment with the expression of subjective experiences – all these undertakings have proved themselves to be sort of nonsense experiments. These experiments have served to bring back to life, and to illuminate all the more glaringly, exactly those structures of art which they were meant to dissolve. They gave a new legitimacy, as an end in itself, to appearance as the medium of fiction, to the transcendence of the art work over society, to the concentrated and planned character of artistic production as well as to the special cognitive status of judgments of taste. The radical attempt to negate art has ended up ironically by giving due exactly to these categories through which Enlightenment aesthetics had circumscribed its object domain. The surrealists waged the most extreme warfare, but two mistakes in particular destroyed their revolt. First, when the containers of an autonomously developed cultural sphere are shattered, the contents get dispersed. Nothing remains from a desublimated meaning or a destructured form; an emancipatory effect does not follow.

Their second mistake has more important consequences. In everyday communication, cognitive meanings, moral expectations, subjective expressions and evaluations must relate to one another. Communication processes need a cultural tradition covering all spheres – cognitive, moral–practical and expressive. A rationalized everyday life, therefore, could hardly be saved from cultural impoverishment through breaking open a single cultural sphere – art – and so providing access to just one of the specialized knowledge complexes. The surrealist revolt would have replaced only one abstraction.

In the sphere of theoretical knowledge and morality as well, there are parallels to this failed attempt of what we might call the false negation of culture. Only they are less pronounced. Since the days of the Young Hegelians, there has been talk about the negation of philosophy.

Since Marx, the question of the relationship of theory and practice has been posed. However, Marxist intellectuals joined a social movement; and only at its peripheries were there sectarian attempts to carry out a program of the negation of philosophy similar to the surrealist program to negate art. A parallel to the surrealist mistakes becomes visible in these programs when one observes the consequences of dogmatism and of moral rigorism.

A reified everyday praxis can be cured only by creating unconstrained interaction of the cognitive with the moral–practical and the aesthetic–expressive elements. Reification cannot be overcome by forcing just one of those highly stylized cultural spheres to open up and become more accessible. Instead, we see under certain circumstances a relationship emerge between terroristic activities and the over-extension of any one of these spheres into other domains: examples would be tendencies to aestheticize politics, or to replace politics by moral rigorism or to submit it to the dogmatism of a doctrine. These phenomena should not lead us, however, into denouncing the intentions of the surviving Enlightenment tradition as intentions rooted in a 'terroristic reason.' Those who lump together the very project of modernity with the state of consciousness and the spectacular action of the individual terrorist are no less short-sighted than those who would claim that the incomparably more persistent and extensive bureaucratic terror practiced in the dark, in the cellars of the military and secret police, and in camps and institutions, is the *raison d'être* of the modern state, only because this kind of administrative terror makes use of the coercive means of modern bureaucracies.

Alternatives

I think that instead of giving up modernity and its project as a lost cause, we should learn from the mistakes of those extravagant programs which have tried to negate modernity. Perhaps the types of reception of art may offer an example which at least indicates the direction of a way out.

Bourgeois art had two expectations at once from its audiences. On the one hand, the layman who enjoyed art should educate himself to become an expert. On the other hand, he should also behave as a competent consumer who uses art and relates aesthetic experiences to his own life problems. This second, and seemingly harmless, manner of experiencing art has lost its radical implications, exactly because it had a confused relation to the attitude of being expert and professional.

To be sure, artistic production would dry up, if it were not carried out in the form of a specialized treatment of autonomous problems, and if it were to cease to be the concern of experts who do not pay so much attention to exoteric questions. Both artists and critics accept thereby the fact that such problems fall under the spell of what I earlier called the 'inner logic' of a cultural domain. But this sharp delineation, this exclusive concentration on one aspect of validity alone, and the exclusion of aspects of truth and justice, breaks down as soon as aesthetic experience is drawn into an individual life history and is absorbed into ordinary life. The reception of art by the layman, or by the 'everyday expert,' goes in a rather different direction than the reception of art by the professional critic.

Albrecht Wellmer has drawn my attention to one way that an aesthetic experience which is not framed around the experts' critical judgments of taste can have its significance altered: as soon as such an experience is used to illuminate a life-historical situation and is related to life problems, it enters into a language game which is no longer that of the aesthetic critic. The aesthetic experience then not only renews the interpretation of our needs in whose light we perceive the world. It permeates as well our cognitive significations and our normative expections and changes the manner in which all these moments refer to one another. Let me give an example of this process.

This manner of receiving and relating to art is suggested in the first volume of the work *The Aesthetics of Resistance* by the German-Swedish writer Peter Weiss. Weiss describes the process of reappropriating art by presenting a group of politically motivated, knowledge-hungry workers in 1937 in Berlin. These were young people, who, through an evening high school education, acquired the intellectual means to fathom the general and the social history of European art. Out of the resilient edifice of the objective mind, embodied in works of art which they saw again and again in the museums in Berlin, they started removing their own chips of stone, which they gathered together and reassembled in the context of their own milieu. This milieu was far removed from that of traditional education as well as from the then existing regime. These young workers went back and forth between the edifice of European art and their own milieu until they were able to illuminate both.

In examples like this which illustrate the reappropriation of the expert's culture from the standpoint of the life-world, we can discern an element which does justice to the intentions of the hopeless surrealist revolts, and to Brecht's and Benjamin's interests in how artworks (which have lost their aura) can still be received in illuminating ways. In sum, the project of modernity has not yet been fulfilled. And the reception of art is only one of at least three of its aspects. The project aims at a differentiated relinking of modern culture with an everyday praxis that still depends on vital heritages, but would be impoverished through mere traditionalism. This new connection, however, can only be established under the condition that societal modernization will also be steered in a different direction. The life-world has to become able to develop institutions out of itself which sets limits to the internal dynamics and to the imperatives of an almost autonomous economic system and its administrative complements.

If I am not mistaken, the chances for this today are not very good. More or less in the entire Western world, a climate has developed that furthers capitalist modernization processes as well as trends critical of cultural modernism. The disillusionment with the very failures of those programs that called for the negation of art and philosophy has come to serve as a pretense for conservative positions. Let me briefly distinguish the antimodernism of the young conservatives from the premodernism of the old conservatives and from the postmodernism of the neoconservatives.

The *Young Conservatives* recapitulate the basic experience of aesthetic modernity. They claim as their own the revelations of a decentered subjectivity, emancipated from the imperatives of work and usefulness, and with this experience they step outside the modern world. On the basis of modernistic attitudes, they justify an irreconcilable anti-modernism. They remove into the sphere of the far away and the archaic the spontaneous powers of imagination, of self-experience and of emotionality. To instrumental reason, they juxtapose in manichean fashion a principle only accessible through evocation, be it the will to power or sovereignty, Being or the dionysiac force of the poetical. In France this line leads from Bataille via Foucault to Derrida.

The *Old Conservatives* do not allow themselves to be contaminated by cultural modernism. They observe the decline of substantive reason, the differentiation of science, morality and art, the modern world view and its merely procedural rationality, with sadness and recommend a withdrawal to a position *anterior* to modernity.

Neo-Aristotelianism, in particular, enjoys a certain success today. In view of the problematic of ecology, it allows itself to call for a cosmological ethic. As belonging to this school, which originates with Leo Strauss, one can count for example the interesting works of Hans Jonas and Robert Spaemann.

Finally, the *Neoconservatives* welcome the development of modern science, as long as this only goes beyond its sphere to carry forward technical progress, capitalist growth and rational administration. Moreover, they recommend a politics of defusing the explosive content of

cultural modernity. According to one thesis, science, when properly understood, has become irrevocably meaningless for the orientation of the life-world. A further thesis is that politics must be kept as far aloof as possible from the demands of moral–practical justification. And a third thesis asserts the pure immanence of art, disputes that it has a utopian content, and points to its illusory character in order to limit the aesthetic experience to privacy. One could name here the early Wittgenstein, Carl Schmitt of the middle period, and Gottfried Benn of the late period. But with the decisive confinement of science, morality and art to autonomous spheres separated from the life-world and administered by experts, what remains from the project of cultural modernity is only what we would have if we were to give up the project of modernity altogether. As a replacement one points to traditions, which, however, are held to be immune to demands of (normative) justification and validation.

This typology is like any other, of course, a simplification; but it may not prove totally useless for the analysis of contemporary intellectual and political confrontations. I fear that the ideas of anti-modernity, together with an additional touch of premodernity, are becoming popular in the circles of alternative culture. When one observes the transformations of consciousness within political parties in Germany, a new ideological shift (*Tendenzwende*) becomes visible. And this is the alliance of post-modernists with premodernists. It seems to me that there is no party in particular that monopolizes the abuse of intellectuals and the position of neoconservatism. I therefore have good reason to be thankful for the liberal spirit in which the city of Frankfurt offers me a prize bearing the name of Theodor Adorno. Adorno, a most significant son of this city, who as philosopher and writer has stamped the image of the intellectual in our country in incomparable fashion; even more, who has become the very image of emulation for the intellectual.

Translated by Seyla Ben-Habib

Notes

1 This essay was delivered as a James Lecture of the New York Institute for the Humanities at New York University on March 5, 1981. It had been delivered first in German in September 1980 when Habermas was awarded the Theodor W. Adorno prize by the city of Frankfurt.

2 Peter Steinfells, *The Neoconservatives*, New York, 1979, p. 65.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Jürgen Habermas in English

The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (1962), trans. T. Burger with F. Lawrence, Cambridge: Polity, 1989.

Theory and Practice (1963), trans. J. Viertel, Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.

On the Logic of the Social Sciences (1967), trans. S. Weber Nicholsen and J. Stark, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988.

Knowledge and Human Interests (1968), trans. J.J. Shapiro, Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.

Toward a Rational Society (1968–69), trans. J.J. Shapiro, Boston: Beacon Press, 1970.

Legitimation Crisis (1973), trans. T. McCarthy, Boston: Beacon Press, 1975.

Communication and the Evolution of Society (1976), trans. T. McCarthy, London: Heinemann, 1979.

The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society (1981), trans. T. McCarthy, Boston: Beacon Press, 1984.

The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2: Lifeworld and System (1981), trans. T. McCarthy, Boston: Beacon Press, 1987.

Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action (1983), trans. C. Lenhardt and S. Weber Nicholsen, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990.
The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (1985), trans. F. Lawrence, Cambridge: Polity, 1987.
Postmetaphysical Thinking (1988), trans. W.M. Hohengarten, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992.
Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy (1992), trans. W. Rehg, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996.
Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory (1996), eds C. Cronin and P. DeGreiff, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998.
The Postnational Constellation (1998), ed. and trans. M. Pensky, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001.
Truth and Justification (1999), trans. B. Fultner, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.
On the Pragmatics of Communication, ed. M. Cooke, Cambridge: Polity, 1999.
The Future of Human Nature (2001), trans. W. Rehg, M. Pensky, and H. Beister, Cambridge: Polity, 2003.
Religion and Rationality: Essays on Reason, God and Modernity, ed. E. Medieta, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002.
The Divided West, trans. C. Cronin, Cambridge: Polity, 2004.

Further reading

Introductions to Habermas's philosophy are available from Bohman and Rehg (2007) and McCarthy (1978). For studies covering different aspects of his thought, see White (1995). His aesthetic theory is addressed by Barbosa (2003), Duvenage (2003), Ingram (1987), Piche (1991), Shapiro (1986), and Zuidervaart (2004). Questions of modernity are explored by Bernstein (1989) and Dumm (1988). Habermas (1984) is his own response to critics of his aesthetic modernity.

R. Barbosa, 'Habermas and the specificity of the aesthetic', *Symposium*, 2003, vol. 7, pp. 87–98.
J.M. Bernstein, 'The causality of faith: modernity and modernism in Habermas', *Praxis International*, 1989, vol. 8, pp. 407–25.
J. Bohman and W. Rehg, 'Jürgen Habermas', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2007. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/habermas/ (accessed 25 May 2010).
T.L. Dumm, 'The politics of postmodern aesthetics: Habermas contra Foucault', *Political Theory*, 1988, vol. 16, pp. 209–28.
P. Duvenage, *Habermas and Aesthetics: The Limits of Communicative Action*, Cambridge: Polity, 2003.
J. Habermans, 'Questions and Counterquestions', *Praxis International*, 1984, vol. 4, pp. 229–49.
D. Ingram, 'Philosophy and the aesthetic mediation of life: Weber and Habermas on the paradox of rationality', *Philosophical Forum*, 1987, vol. 18, pp. 329–57.
T. McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978.
C. Piche, 'Art and democracy in Habermas', in H.J. Silverman (ed.), *Writing the Politics of Difference*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991.
G. Shapiro, 'Gadamer, Habermas and the death of art', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 1986, vol. 26, pp. 39–47.
S. White (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
L. Zuidervaart, 'Imaginative disclosure: Adorno, Habermas, and artistic truth', *Symposium*, 2004, vol. 8, pp. 519–48.

PART 4

Excess and Affect

Introduction

'EXCESS' AND 'AFFECT' ARE TWO FORMS of the aesthetic which have grown in prominence over the last century across a range of philosophical and cultural traditions, especially in psychoanalysis and postmodernism. The two concepts are linked: we are touched, we are affected by, that which exceeds, or breaks free from, a particular framework or form of representation. In general terms, 'affect' means 'emotion', 'feeling', 'passion', 'sentiment', and the force which can influence the mind or mood of another. In recent aesthetics, the term denotes a mode of becoming whose (transient) identity is derived from its acting upon or being acted upon by another. It is a force or quality which, because of its dynamic, relational condition, exceeds the compartmentalization exercised by conventional philosophical distinctions, such as subject–object and mind–body, and allows moments of contact and transformation normally excluded or overlooked – bodily, sensory, or other – to become occasions where new identities are formed. Having exceeded a conventional concept or framework, a force or emotion (or whatever, since we may not know what it is) impresses itself upon us but in ways which require us to reconsider how signification is possible or to entertain the relation between the representable and the unrepresentable.

Excess and affect do not occur in the same way for all the authors in this section: Sigmund Freud, Maurice Blanchot, Georges Bataille, Jacques Lacan, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and Slavoj Žižek. The paper from Freud on the unconscious represents the shift in his thought from positivist neurology to a more interpretive psychology, in which the transition from unconscious to conscious is theorized as an affect created by putting an experience into words. Lacan also asks how a material form, the letter, might interact with and 'speak of' an immaterial form, the unconscious. He argues that the process of linguistic signification demands a different understanding of the relation between the human subject and thought, on account of the self's radical 'excentricity' or otherness to itself. Blanchot defends the singularity of the artwork, and argues that if the uniqueness of art is to be ensured, then the question must always remain open, evading answerability. Bataille shows how it is impossible for language or any other organized system to embrace its opposite, while at the same time demonstrating that transgression itself only reinstitutes the contradictions of the very system it is trying to elude.

Working at the intersection of psychoanalysis and deconstruction, Luce Irigaray turns psychoanalysis on itself, using the deconstructive strategies of linguistic selection, conjunction, omission, and emphasis to reveal the construction of gender within psychoanalytic discourse. Through a close reading of Lacan's *Encore, Le Seminaire XX*, Irigaray shows how women's pleasure is either denied signification in Lacan's discourse or shaped by it into a male fantasy of feminine pleasure. For Julia Kristeva, it is the manner in which the prelinguistic imaginary breaks through and disrupts the linguistic symbolic which is of interest. She focuses on the abject, the experience of being repelled or disgusted by the thing in front of us, to show how conventional, symbolic description can approach the prelinguistic imaginary. Drawing out the blindspots or gaps revealed by a Lacanian psychoanalysis of culture is one of the methods Žižek adopts as part of his rehabilitation of dialectical materialism. He finds that the 'real' (a technical term for Lacan and Žižek) can never be represented in film on account of vision and subjectivity within Lacan's theory of the gaze being structured by a system of differences with an insatiable appetite for otherness.

Figures included in other sections in this *Reader* could equally have been included here, such as Judith Butler, focusing on moments of excess in discourse, and Jean-François Lyotard, examining how the sublime as privation prepares the ground for the avant-garde's stripping away of established forms of representation. It is their engagement with other long-standing themes – the body with Butler and postmodernism with Lyotard – that is responsible for their being located elsewhere in the *Reader*.

Chapter 17

SIGMUND FREUD

INTRODUCTION

In a 1913 article, Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) defines psychoanalysis as 'a medical procedure which aims at the cure of certain forms of nervous disease (the neuroses) by a psychological technique'.[1] This modest definition does not do justice to the impact which his work has had on our understanding of the relationship between mental and physical life. His early studies of hypnotism, made while in Paris working under the innovative French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot, showed that a patient's symptoms could be temporarily removed following suggestions made by the hypnotist. This implied there was a psychosomatic relation between mental ideas and physical behaviour. 'Psychosomatic' is often associated with medical cases where changes in behaviour occur because a patient *thinks* the medicine will help him, rather than because the medicine itself has a definite causal effect. It therefore carries with it an unfortunate sense of delusion. With Freud, however, the word is not used as a contrast term to causality. His concern lies with the influence which ideas have on physical reality. The process of thought, especially the act of interpreting images and events from the patient's mental life, he argues, affects and alters behaviour. Neuroses are created by civilization and the interests of respectability suppressing certain actions and desires. The pressure which these repressed events exert on our mental lives can be relieved through verbalization. However, it is not the accurate description of original meaning – as in the question 'Did this really happen?' – which relieves the pressure, Freud argues, but the free, metaphorical play of associations. Through examination of neuroses, dreams, and parapraxes (or slips of the tongue, now, of course, referred to as Freudian slips), Freud constructs a revolutionary theory of the human psyche as a structure of meaning or interpretation.

All this is in stark contrast to nineteenth-century psychology's commitment to positivism and knowledge through experimentation and observation: once the data of physical sensation had been exhaustively described, the positivists argued, there was nothing left to say about the world. Psychology prior to Freud had already acknowledged that there was more to the individual's mental life than the experiences of which she was consciously aware. 'What we are conscious of,' the philosopher William Hamilton wrote in 1842, 'is constructed out of what we are not conscious of.'[2] A century earlier, Hume had announced that the self was something which eluded conscious, perceptual grasp.[3] From the 1770s, public displays of animal magnetism, mesmerism, and hypnotism were offered as evidence of the existence of unconscious mental activity. The problem was how to access and account for this dimension of experience. It takes the form of one of philosophy's oldest conundrums: how can one know that which is beyond knowability? How are we to arrive at conscious knowledge of the unconscious?

The physicalist or vitalist approach assumes that unconsciously motivated experiences ultimately have a latent, conscious origin, usually a particular childhood event. This commitment to a unitary cause is analogous to the positivist thesis that mental states can be identified with particular events in the individual's nervous system, e.g. Bell and Magendie's law of specific nerve energies, and Comte's phrenology.[4] The vitalist programme of analysis maintains that the patient can be freed from the trauma if the analyst prompts him through talking and interpretation to remember the experience, that is, to allow a cathartic release of the experience into consciousness.

The problem with this view, Freud argues, is that it regards each experience to be meaningful in itself and assumes that the meaning of the experience, once released, is open and accessible to consciousness without restriction or reservation. It is a mistake, he asserts, to picture the unconscious as merely a second, albeit submerged consciousness. In his 1915 theoretical essay 'The Unconscious' (included in this volume in abridged form), he argues:

> Just as Kant warned us not to overlook the fact that our perceptions are subjectively conditioned and must not be regarded as identical with what is perceived though unknowable, so psycho-analysis warns us not to equate perceptions by means of consciousness with the unconscious mental processes which are their object. Like the physical, the psychical is not necessarily in reality what it appears to us to be.

This point develops Freud's allusion to Kant in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) where he identifies the opacity of unconscious mental activity with the partial and transformative nature of sensory perception: the unconscious, he writes, '*is as incompletely presented by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the communications of our sense organs*'.[5]

Psychoanalysis encounters the opacity of experience in a variety of ways. For example, Freud discovered that a later event can alter the relevance which is ascribed to an earlier one, so that what was innocent as an event can become traumatic as a memory. The case of Emma is an example.[6] Having her genitalia felt through her clothes by a male shopkeeper when she was eight *only becomes traumatic* for her when, four years later, she encounters two shopping assistants in a store laughing together. Also, Freud judged the emergence of fantasy in patients' descriptions of events to be an important aspect of neuroses. Acts of sexual abuse recounted during analysis, directed against the patient when they were a child by an adult, had often never taken place; they were fantasies made up by the patient or suggested to them by Freud himself. It was not the case that the patients were 'simply' lying but, as Freud remarks, that 'there are no indications of reality in the unconscious, so that one cannot distinguish between the truth and fiction that is cathected with affect'.[7] This realization prompted him to conclude that, as regards neurosis, 'psychical reality was of more importance than material reality'.[8]

Perhaps the most well-known example of a psychological impulse which obscures and conceals is the concept of *Verdrängung* or 'defence' or 'repression'. The term was already in use in nineteenth-century psychology, for example, by Herbart, but is assigned a particular and central role in Freud's system. The essence of repression, Freud avers, '*lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious*'.[9] It is a form of 'psychical censorship' which operates both at large (where there is 'psychical equilibrium') in the formation of dreams and, more specifically, in the formation of neuroses (cases of 'psychical disturbance'), such as anxiety hysteria, where, for example, fear of an animal is the conscious manifestation of an unconscious, libidinal, and fearful perception of the patient's father. The theory of repression is supported by the 'pleasure principle': the course of mental events 'takes a direction such that its final outcome coincides with...an avoidance of unpleasure or a production of pleasure'.[10] We forget so many

facts of our external and internal lives, Freud suggests, because they are distressing or shameful or painful. However, it is possible for the analyst to make the patient translate and express them in some way. As he declares in his 'Autobiographical Study', in order to make an experience conscious again,

> it was necessary to overcome something that fought against one in the patient; it was necessary to make efforts on one's own part so as to urge and compel him to remember... The expenditure of force on the part of the physician was evidently the measure of a resistance on the part of the patient. It was only necessary to translate into words what I myself had observed, and I was in possession of the theory of repression.[11]

The text representing Freud is an abridged version of 'The Unconscious'. It is the clearest and most forthright exposition of both his concept of the unconscious and his understanding of the relation between repression and language. The essay is one of the five surviving metapsychological papers from 1915. Studies of Freud's correspondence suggest that a further seven were completed during the year but later destroyed by him.[12] The difference between conscious and unconscious presentations, and 'what it is that repression denies to the rejected presentation in the transference neuroses', Freud argues, is 'translation into words which shall remain attached to the object. A presentation which is not put into words, or a psychical act which is not hypercathected, remains thereafter in the [unconscious] in a state of repression.' At issue here are 'considerations of representability': the way in which a word or phrase might find expression and re-presentation in an image or vice versa, and, most importantly, the shifts in emphasis and meaning which occur with the transition from one medium to another. 'Displacement' refers to the process of conversion which leads from one idea to another, and 'condensation' acknowledges that it is the very 'pouring of the content of a thought into another mould' which creates connections that 'might not otherwise have been present'.[13] The relationship between word and thing or concept and image is thus the axis of exchange between the conscious and the unconscious in Freud's system.

The technical term 'cathexis' is prominent in the final section of 'The Unconscious' and requires explanation. It is an important word for Freud: it reflects the shift in his thought from positivist neurology to a more interpretive psychology, and is vital to his theory of repression. 'Cathexis' is a translation, invented by Strachey (the overseeing editor of the English *Standard Edition* of Freud's works), of the original German *Besetzung*, meaning 'filling' or 'occupation' (as by troops) or 'charge' (as in electrical charge). Strachey's translation is derived from the Greek *catechein*, meaning 'to occupy'. The introduction of the concept in pyschology follows the positivist neurological discovery that the nervous system consists of chains of neurones and the inference that mental processes correspond to material quanta.

Freud grew up and worked in positivist Vienna, and so could not help but be influenced by the philosophy. As Strachey notes, Freud often relies on phrases such as '*mit Energie ausgestattet*' ('supplied with energy') and '*mit einer Erregungssumme behaftet*' ('loaded with a sum of excitation').[14] In 'The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence' (1894), Freud suggests that 'in mental functioning something is to be distinguished – a quota of affect or sum of excitation – which possesses all the characteristics of a quantity (though we have no means of measuring it), which is...spread over the memory-traces of ideas somewhat as an electric charge is spread over the surface of a body'.[15] However, as Freud's research led him away from identifying traumas with particular neurological events to associating them with structures of meaning around events, so his use of terms such as 'cathexis' and 'cathectic energy' became more theoretical or even metaphorical; they became, in effect, abstract ways of describing the extent to which ideas *occupy*

the mind. Thus, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, a *neglected* line of thought is one which has '*not received*' cathectic energy, a *repressed* idea is one from which cathexis 'has been *withdrawn*', and a 'purposive cathexis' is a particular idea which 'is capable of attracting the attention of consciousness to itself'.[16] This 'drawing attention to oneself' or 'becoming prominent', Freud terms 'hypercathexis'. We might understand 'cathexis' in general then to refer to the propensity of an idea to appear before consciousness.

In this regard, Freud shares phenomenology's interest in intentionality or object-directedness: consciousness is necessarily consciousness of something. Enfolded within every moment of consciousness are the binary elements of subjective awareness and *the something* which that awareness is aware of. Although normally ascribed to Brentano, the concept of intentionality has its roots in Kant's transcendental deduction and his attempt to show how the experiential divide between subject and object originally opens. The conditions of possibility of subjectivity, Kant asserts, are, at one and the same time, the conditions of possibility of objectivity. Compare this with Freud's suggestion that 'we form the idea of there being an original libidinal cathexis of the ego, from which some is later given off to objects, but which fundamentally persists and is related to the object-cathexes much as the body of an amoeba is related to the pseudopodia which it puts out'.[17] Freud ultimately identifies cathexis with his concept of libido, the energy of the sexual instincts present, he maintains, from the beginning in every individual's life.[18] This is on the basis that sexual instinct is itself a form of object-directedness, the highest form of which is 'the state of being in love, when the subject seems to give up his own personality in favour of an object-cathexis'.[19]

Is it the case that Freud relies too heavily on the free association of ideas? Every idea can be associated with something, so how can psychoanalysis claim to be the objective assessment of a latent, original content? Freud does consider this objection. Association is never free in the sense that it is random or arbitrary. We can only ever exclude ideas 'that are *known* to us'.[20] Once we have done this, 'unknown' or 'unconscious' ideas take over. It is through apparently superficial or easy-going associations that 'the resistance of censorship' is made manifest. The jump from one idea to another is a thick and complex transformation, comparable to 'the problem of representing in pictures a leading article from a political newspaper' (Freud's analogy)[21] or to giving an aesthetic description of an artwork. Through association and conceptual translation, we test the recalcitrance of ideas, and it is these textures of meaning which define the psyche for Freud.

It is the importance Freud assigns to interpretation which has made his theory of the self so influential in the arts: the meanings we attach to events are generated when experiences are brought into relation or undergo transformation through representation. To appreciate this point, one only has to consider how placing two objects side-by-side creates a network of similarities and differences which affects how each of the two objects is perceived. Art and literature therefore become paradigm forms of experience for psychoanalysis, since they are discourses which create significance through juxtaposition and which require interpretation.

Notes

1 Sigmund Freud, 'The claims of psycho-analysis to scientific interest', *Totem and Taboo, Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* XIII, ed. J. Strachey, London: Hogarth Press, 1974, p. 165. All further references to this edition of Freud's works abbreviated to *SE*.

2 Quoted by J. Miller, 'Going unconscious', *Hidden Histories of Science*, ed. Robert B. Silvers, London: Granta, 1997, p. 19.

3 For example, Hume writes: 'When my perceptions are remov'd for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist'; D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978, p. 252.

4 See D.N. Robinson, *An Intellectual History of Psychology*, New York: Macmillan, 1981, pp. 326–42.
5 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams, Part 2*, *SE* V, p. 613, original emphasis.
6 A full account is given in 'Project for a scientific psychology' (1895), *SE* I, pp. 353–56.
7 Freud, 'Fliess Papers: Letter 69, September 21, 1897', *SE* I, p. 260.
8 Freud, 'Autobiographical study', *SE* XX, p. 34.
9 Freud, 'Repression', *SE* XIV, p. 147.
10 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, *SE* XVIII, p. 7. See also 'Instincts and their vicissitudes', *SE* XIV, p. 121 n., and 'Repression', *SE* XIV, pp. 146–53.
11 Freud, 'Autobiographical study', *SE* XX, p. 29.
12 Strachey recounts this at *SE* XIV, pp. 105–06.
13 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams, Part 2*, *SE* V, p. 344.
14 Strachey, 'Editor's introduction', *SE* II, p. xxiii.
15 Freud, *SE* III, p. 60.
16 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams, Part 2*, *SE* V, p. 594.
17 Freud, *SE* XIV, pp. 75–79.
18 See, for example, 'On narcissism: an introduction', *SE* XIV, p. 75, and 'Repression', *SE* XIV, p. 152.
19 Freud, 'On narcissism: an introduction', *SE* XIV, p. 76.
20 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams, Part 2*, *SE* V, p. 528.
21 Different versions of the analogy can be found in *The Interpretation of Dreams, Part 2*, *SE* V, p. 340, and 'A metapsychological supplement to the theory of dreams', *SE* XIV, p. 228 n.

■ ■ ■

THE UNCONSCIOUS

SIGMUND FREUD

We have learnt from psycho-analysis that the essence of the process of repression lies, not in putting an end to, in annihilating, the idea which represents an instinct, but in preventing it from becoming conscious. When this happens we say of the idea that it is in a state of being 'unconscious',[1] and we can produce good evidence to show that even when it is unconscious it can produce effects, even including some which finally reach consciousness. Everything that is repressed must remain unconscious; but let us state at the very outset that the repressed does not cover everything that is unconscious. The unconscious has the wider compass: the repressed is a part of the unconscious.

How are we to arrive at a knowledge of the unconscious? It is of course only as something conscious that we know it, after it has undergone transformation or translation into something conscious. Psycho-analytic work shows us every day that translation of this kind is possible. In order that this should come about, the person under analysis must overcome certain resistances – the same resistances as those which, earlier, made the material concerned into something repressed by rejecting it from the conscious.

I Justification for the concept of the unconscious

Our right to assume the existence of something mental that is unconscious and to employ that assumption for the purposes of scientific work is disputed in many quarters. To this we can reply that our assumption of the unconscious is necessary and legitimate, and that we possess numerous proofs of its existence.

It is necessary because the data of consciousness have a very large number of gaps in them; both in healthy and in sick people psychical acts often occur which can be explained only by

presupposing other acts, of which, nevertheless, consciousness affords no evidence. These not only include parapraxes and dreams in healthy people, and everything described as a psychical symptom or an obsession in the sick; our most personal daily experience acquaints us with ideas that come into our head we do not know from where, and with intellectual conclusions arrived at we do not know how. All these conscious acts remain disconnected and unintelligible if we insist upon claiming that every mental act that occurs in us must also necessarily be experienced by us through consciousness; on the other hand, they fall into a demonstrable connection if we interpolate between them the unconscious acts which we have inferred. A gain in meaning is a perfectly justifiable ground for going beyond the limits of direct experience. When, in addition, it turns out that the assumption of there being an unconscious enables us to construct a successful procedure by which we can exert an effective influence upon the course of conscious processes, this success will have given us an incontrovertible proof of the existence of what we have assumed. This being so, we must adopt the position that to require that whatever goes on in the mind must also be known to consciousness is to make an untenable claim.

We can go further and argue, in support of there being an unconscious psychical state, that at any given moment consciousness includes only a small content, so that the greater part of what we call conscious knowledge must in any case be for very considerable periods of time in a state of latency, that is to say, of being psychically unconscious. When all our latent memories are taken into consideration it becomes totally incomprehensible how the existence of the unconscious can be denied. But here we encounter the objection that these latent recollections can no longer be described as psychical, but that they correspond to residues of somatic processes from which what is psychical can once more arise. The obvious answer to this is that a latent memory is, on the contrary, an unquestionable residuum of a *psychical* process. But it is more important to realize clearly that this objection is based on the equation – not, it is true, explicitly stated but taken as axiomatic – of what is conscious with what is mental. This equation is either a *petitio principii* which begs the question whether everything that is psychical is also necessarily conscious; or else it is a matter of convention, of nomenclature. In this latter case it is, of course, like any other convention, not open to refutation. The question remains, however, whether the convention is so expedient that we are bound to adopt it. To this we may reply that the conventional equation of the psychical with the conscious is totally inexpedient. It disrupts psychical continuities, plunges us into the insoluble difficulties of psycho-physical parallelism,[2] is open to the reproach that for no obvious reason it over-estimates the part played by consciousness, and that it forces us prematurely to abandon the field of psychological research without being able to offer us any compensation from other fields.

It is clear in any case that this question – whether the latent states of mental life, whose existence is undeniable, are to be conceived of as conscious mental states or as physical ones – threatens to resolve itself into a verbal dispute. We shall therefore be better advised to focus our attention on what we know with certainty of the nature of these debatable states. As far as their physical characteristics are concerned, they are totally inaccessible to us: no physiological concept or chemical process can give us any notion of their nature. On the other hand, we know for certain that they have abundant points of contact with conscious mental processes; with the help of a certain amount of work they can be transformed into, or replaced by, conscious mental processes, and all the categories which we employ to describe conscious mental acts, such as ideas, purposes, resolutions and so on, can be applied to them. Indeed, we are obliged to say of some of these latent states that the only respect in which they differ from conscious ones is precisely in the absence of consciousness. Thus we shall not hesitate to treat them as objects of psychological research, and to deal with them in the most intimate connection with conscious mental acts.

The stubborn denial of a psychical character to latent mental acts is accounted for by the circumstance that most of the phenomena concerned have not been the subject of study outside psycho-analysis. Anyone who is ignorant of pathological facts, who regards the parapraxes of normal people as accidental, and who is content with the old saw that dreams are froth ['*Träume sind Schäume*'][3] has only to ignore a few more problems of the psychology of consciousness in order to spare himself any need to assume an unconscious mental activity. Incidentally, even before the time of psycho-analysis, hypnotic experiments, and especially post-hypnotic suggestion, had tangibly demonstrated the existence and mode of operation of the mental unconscious.[4]

The assumption of an unconscious is, moreover, a perfectly *legitimate* one, inasmuch as in postulating it we are not departing a single step from our customary and generally accepted mode of thinking. Consciousness makes each of us aware only of his own states of mind; that other people, too, possess a consciousness is an inference which we draw by analogy from their observable utterances and actions, in order to make this behaviour of theirs intelligible to us. (It would no doubt be psychologically more correct to put it in this way: that without any special reflection we attribute to everyone else our own constitution and therefore our consciousness as well, and that this identification is a *sine qua non* of our understanding.) This inference (or this identification) was formerly extended by the ego to other human beings, to animals, plants, inanimate objects and to the world at large, and proved serviceable so long as their similarity to the individual ego was overwhelmingly great; but it became more untrustworthy in proportion as the difference between the ego and these 'others' widened. To-day, our critical judgement is already in doubt on the question of consciousness in animals; we refuse to admit it in plants and we regard the assumption of its existence in inanimate matter as mysticism. But even where the original inclination to identification has withstood criticism – that is, when the 'others' are our fellow-men – the assumption of a consciousness in them rests upon an inference and cannot share the immediate certainty which we have of our own consciousness.

Psycho-analysis demands nothing more than that we should apply this process of inference to ourselves also – a proceeding to which, it is true, we are not constitutionally inclined. If we do this, we must say: all the acts and manifestations which I notice in myself and do not know how to link up with the rest of my mental life must be judged as if they belonged to someone else: they are to be explained by a mental life ascribed to this other person. Furthermore, experience shows that we understand very well how to interpret in other people (that is, how to fit into their chain of mental events) the same acts which we refuse to acknowledge as being mental in ourselves. Here some special hindrance evidently deflects our investigations from our own self and prevents our obtaining a true knowledge of it.

This process of inference, when applied to oneself in spite of internal opposition, does not, however, lead to the disclosure of an unconscious; it leads logically to the assumption of another, second consciousness which is united in one's self with the consciousness one knows. But at this point, certain criticisms may fairly be made. In the first place, a consciousness of which its own possessor knows nothing is something very different from a consciousness belonging to another person, and it is questionable whether such a consciousness, lacking, as it does, its most important characteristic, deserves any discussion at all. Those who have resisted the assumption of an unconscious *psychical* are not likely to be ready to exchange it for an unconscious *consciousness*. In the second place, analysis shows that the different latent mental processes inferred by us enjoy a high degree of mutual independence, as though they had no connection with one another, and knew nothing of one another. We must be prepared, if so, to assume the existence in us not only of a second consciousness, but of a third, fourth, perhaps of an unlimited number of states of consciousness, all unknown to us and to one another. In the third place – and this is the most weighty argument of all – we have to take into account the

fact that analytic investigation reveals some of these latent processes as having characteristics and peculiarities which seem alien to us, or even incredible, and which run directly counter to the attributes of consciousness with which we are familiar. Thus we have grounds for modifying our inference about ourselves and saying that what is proved is not the existence of a second consciousness in us, but the existence of psychical acts which lack consciousness. We shall also be right in rejecting the term 'subconsciousness' as incorrect and misleading.[5] The well-known cases of '*double conscience*'[6] (splitting of consciousness) prove nothing against our view. We may most aptly describe them as cases of a splitting of the mental activities into two groups, and say that the same consciousness turns to one or the other of these groups alternately.

In psycho-analysis there is no choice for us but to assert that mental processes are in themselves unconscious, and to liken the perception of them by means of consciousness to the perception of the external world by means of the sense-organs.[7] We can even hope to gain fresh knowledge from the comparison. The psycho-analytic assumption of unconscious mental activity appears to us, on the one hand, as a further expansion of the primitive animism which caused us to see copies of our own consciousness all around us, and, on the other hand, as an extension of the corrections undertaken by Kant of our views on external perception. Just as Kant warned us not to overlook the fact that our perceptions are subjectively conditioned and must not be regarded as identical with what is perceived though unknowable, so psycho-analysis warns us not to equate perceptions by means of consciousness with the unconscious mental processes which are their object. Like the physical, the psychical is not necessarily in reality what it appears to us to be. We shall be glad to learn, however, that the correction of internal perception will turn out not to offer such great difficulties as the correction of external perception – that internal objects are less unknowable than the external world.

II Various meanings of 'the unconscious' – the topographical point of view

Before going any further, let us state the important, though inconvenient, fact that the attribute of being unconscious is only one feature that is found in the psychical and is by no means sufficient fully to characterize it. There are psychical acts of very varying value which yet agree in possessing the characteristic of being unconscious. The unconscious comprises, on the one hand, acts which are merely latent, temporarily unconscious, but which differ in no other respect from conscious ones and, on the other hand, processes such as repressed ones, which if they were to become conscious would be bound to stand out in the crudest contrast to the rest of the conscious processes. It would put an end to all misunderstandings if, from now on, in describing the various kinds of psychical acts we were to disregard the question of whether they were conscious or unconscious, and were to classify and correlate them only according to their relation to instincts and aims, according to their composition and according to which of the hierarchy of psychical systems they belong to. This, however, is for various reasons impracticable, so that we cannot escape the ambiguity of using the words 'conscious' and 'unconscious' sometimes in a descriptive and sometimes in a systematic sense, in which latter they signify inclusion in particular systems and possession of certain characteristics. We might attempt to avoid confusion by giving the psychical systems which we have distinguished certain arbitrarily chosen names which have no reference to the attribute of being conscious. Only we should first have to specify what the grounds are on which we distinguish the systems, and in doing this we should not be able to evade the attribute of being conscious, seeing that it forms the point of departure for all our investigations. Perhaps we may look for some assistance from the proposal to employ, at any rate in writing, the abbreviation *Cs.* for consciousness and *Ucs.* for what is unconscious, when we are using the two words in the systematic sense.[8]

Proceeding now to an account of the positive findings of psycho-analysis, we may say that in general a psychical act goes through two phases as regards its state, between which is interposed a kind of testing (censorship). In the first phase the psychical act is unconscious and belongs to the system *Ucs.*; if, on testing, it is rejected by the censorship, it is not allowed to pass into the second phase; it is then said to be 'repressed' and must remain unconscious. If, however, it passes this testing, it enters the second phase and thenceforth belongs to the second system, which we will call the system *Cs*. But the fact that it belongs to that system does not yet unequivocally determine its relation to consciousness. It is not yet conscious, but it is certainly capable of becoming conscious (to use Breuer's expression)[9] – that is, it can now, given certain conditions, become an object of consciousness without any special resistance. In consideration of this capacity for becoming conscious we also call the system *Cs*. the 'preconscious'. If it should turn out that a certain censorship also plays a part in determining whether the preconscious becomes conscious, we shall discriminate more sharply between the systems *Pcs*. and *Cs*. For the present let it suffice us to bear in mind that the system *Pcs*. shares the characteristics of the system *Cs*. and that the rigorous censorship exercises its office at the point of transition from the *Ucs.* to the *Pcs.* (or *Cs*.).

By accepting the existence of these two (or three) psychical systems, psycho-analysis has departed a step further from the descriptive 'psychology of consciousness' and has raised new problems and acquired a new content. Up till now, it has differed from that psychology mainly by reason of its *dynamic* view of mental processes; now in addition it seems to take account of psychical *topography* as well, and to indicate in respect of any given mental act within what system or between what systems it takes place. On account of this attempt, too, it has been given the name of 'depth-psychology'.[10] We shall hear that it can be further enriched by taking yet another point of view into account.

If we are to take the topography of mental acts seriously we must direct our interest to a doubt which arises at this point. When a psychical act (let us confine ourselves here to one which is in the nature of an idea[11]) is transposed from the system *Ucs.* into the system *Cs*. (or *Pcs.*), are we to suppose that this transposition involves a fresh record – as it were, a second registration – of the idea in question, which may thus be situated as well in a fresh psychical locality, and alongside of which the original unconscious registration continues to exist?[12] Or are we rather to believe that the transposition consists in a change in the state of the idea, a change involving the same material and occurring in the same locality? This question may appear abstruse, but it must be raised if we wish to form a more definite conception of psychical topography, of the dimension of depth in the mind. It is a difficult one because it goes beyond pure psychology and touches on the relations of the mental apparatus to anatomy. We know that in the very roughest sense such relations exist. Research has given irrefutable proof that mental activity is bound up with the function of the brain as it is with no other organ. We are taken a step further – we do not know how much – by the discovery of the unequal importance of the different parts of the brain and their special relations to particular parts of the body and to particular mental activities. But every attempt to go on from there to discover a localization of mental processes, every endeavour to think of ideas as stored up in nerve-cells and of excitations as travelling along nerve-fibres, has miscarried completely.[13] The same fate would await any theory which attempted to recognize, let us say, the anatomical position of the system *Cs*. – conscious mental activity – as being in the cortex, and to localize the unconscious processes in the sub-cortical parts of the brain.[14] There is a hiatus here which at present cannot be filled, nor is it one of the tasks of psychology to fill it. Our psychical topography has *for the present* nothing to do with anatomy; it has reference not to anatomical localities, but to regions in the mental apparatus, wherever they may be situated in the body.

In this respect, then, our work is untrammelled and may proceed according to its own requirements. It will, however, be useful to remind ourselves that as things stand our hypotheses

set out to be no more than graphic illustrations. The first of the two possibilities which we considered – namely, that the *Cs.* phase of an idea implies a fresh registration of it, which is situated in another place – is doubtless the cruder but also the more convenient. The second hypothesis – that of a merely functional change of state – is a priori more probable, but it is less plastic, less easy to manipulate. With the first, or topographical, hypothesis is bound up that of a topographical separation of the systems *Ucs.* and *Cs.* and also the possibility that an idea may exist simultaneously in two places in the mental apparatus – indeed, that if it is not inhibited by the censorship, it regularly advances from the one position to the other, possibly without losing its first location or registration.

This view may seem odd, but it can be supported by observations from psycho-analytic practice. If we communicate to a patient some idea which he has at one time repressed but which we have discovered in him, our telling him makes at first no change in his mental condition. Above all, it does not remove the repression nor undo its effects, as might perhaps be expected from the fact that the previously unconscious idea has now become conscious. On the contrary, all that we shall achieve at first will be a fresh rejection of the repressed idea. But now the patient has in actual fact the same idea in two forms in different places in his mental apparatus: first, he has the conscious memory of the auditory trace of the idea, conveyed in what we told him; and secondly, he also has – as we know for certain – the unconscious memory of his experience as it was in its earlier form.[15] Actually there is no lifting of the repression until the conscious idea, after the resistances have been overcome, has entered into connection with the unconscious memory-trace. It is only through the making conscious of the latter itself that success is achieved. On superficial consideration this would seem to show that conscious and unconscious ideas are distinct registrations, topographically separated, of the same content. But a moment's reflection shows that the identity of the information given to the patient with his repressed memory is only apparent. To have heard something and to have experienced something are in their psychological nature two quite different things, even though the content of both is the same.

So for the moment we are not in a position to decide between the two possibilities that we have discussed. Perhaps later on we shall come upon factors which may turn the balance in favour of one or the other. Perhaps we shall make the discovery that our question was inadequately framed and that the difference between an unconscious and a conscious idea has to be defined in quite another way.

* * *

VII Assessment of the unconscious

What we have put together in the preceding discussions is probably as much as we can say about the *Ucs.* so long as we only draw upon our knowledge of dream-life and the transference neuroses. It is certainly not much, and at some points it gives an impression of obscurity and confusion; and above all it offers us no possibility of co-ordinating or subsuming the *Ucs.* into any context with which we are already familiar. It is only the analysis of one of the affections which we call narcissistic psychoneuroses that promises to furnish us with conceptions through which the enigmatic *Ucs.* will be brought more within our reach and, as it were, made tangible.

Since the publication of a work by Abraham (1908) – which that conscientious author has attributed to my instigation – we have tried to base our characterization of Kraepelin's 'dementia praecox' (Bleuler's 'schizophrenia') on its position with reference to the antithesis between ego and object. In the transference neuroses (anxiety hysteria, conversion hysteria and obsessional neurosis) there was nothing to give special prominence to this antithesis. We knew,

indeed, that frustration in regard to the object brings on the outbreak of the neurosis and that the neurosis involves a renunciation of the real object; we knew too that the libido that is withdrawn from the real object reverts first to a phantasied object and then to one that had been repressed (introversion).[16] But in these disorders object-cathexis in general is retained with great energy, and more detailed examination of the process of repression has obliged us to assume that object-cathexis persists in the system *Ucs.* in spite of – or rather in consequence of – repression. Indeed, the capacity for transference, of which we make use for therapeutic purposes in these affections, presupposes an unimpaired object-cathexis.

In the case of schizophrenia, on the other hand, we have been driven to the assumption that after the process of repression the libido that has been withdrawn does not seek a new object, but retreats into the ego; that is to say, that here the object-cathexes are given up and a primitive objectless condition of narcissism is re-established. The incapacity of these patients for transference (so far as the pathological process extends), their consequent inaccessibility to therapeutic efforts, their characteristic repudiation of the external world, the appearance of signs of a hypercathexis of their own ego, the final outcome in complete apathy – all these clinical features seem to agree excellently with the assumption that their object-cathexes have been given up. As regards the relation of the two psychical systems to each other, all observers have been struck by the fact that in schizophrenia a great deal is expressed as being conscious which in the transference neuroses can only be shown to be present in the *Ucs.* by psycho-analysis. But to begin with we were not able to establish any intelligible connection between the ego–object relation and the relationships of consciousness.

What we are seeking seems to present itself in the following unexpected way. In schizophrenics we observe – especially in the initial stages, which are so instructive – a number of changes in *speech*, some of which deserve to be regarded from a particular point of view. The patient often devotes peculiar care to his way of expressing himself, which becomes 'stilted' and 'precious'. The construction of his sentences undergoes a peculiar disorganization, making them so incomprehensible to us that his remarks seem nonsensical. Some reference to bodily organs or innervations is often given prominence in the content of these remarks. To this may be added the fact that in such symptoms of schizophrenia as are comparable with the substitutive formations of hysteria or obsessional neurosis, the relation between the substitute and the repressed material nevertheless displays peculiarities which would surprise us in these two forms of neurosis.

Dr. Victor Tausk of Vienna has placed at my disposal some observations that he has made in the initial stages of schizophrenia in a female patient, which are particularly valuable in that the patient was ready to explain her utterances herself.[17] I will take two of his examples to illustrate the view I wish to put forward, and I have no doubt that every observer could easily produce plenty of such material.

A patient of Tausk's, a girl who was brought to the clinic after a quarrel with her lover, complained that *her eyes were not right, they were twisted*. This she herself explained by bringing forward a series of reproaches against her lover in coherent language. 'She could not understand him at all, he looked different every time; he was a hypocrite, an eye-twister,[18] he had twisted her eyes; now she had twisted eyes; they were not her eyes any more; now she saw the world with different eyes.'

The patient's comments on her unintelligible remark have the value of an analysis, for they contain the equivalent of the remark expressed in a generally comprehensible form. They throw light at the same time on the meaning and the genesis of schizophrenic word-formation. I agree with Tausk in stressing in this example the point that the patient's relation to a bodily organ (the eye) has arrogated to itself the representation of the whole content [of her thoughts]. Here the schizophrenic utterance exhibits a hypochondriac trait: it has become '*organ-speech*'.[19]

A second communication by the same patient was as follows: 'She was standing in church. Suddenly she felt a jerk; she had to *change her position, as though somebody was putting her into a position, as though she was being put in a certain position*.'

Now came the analysis of this through a fresh series of reproaches against her lover.

> He was common, he had made her common, too, though she was naturally refined. He had made her like himself by making her think that he was superior to her; now she had become like him, because she thought she would be better if she were like him. He had *given a false impression of his position*; now she was just like him [by identification,] he had *put her in a false position*.

The physical movement of 'changing her position', Tausk remarks, depicted the words 'putting her in a false position' and her identification with her lover. I would call attention once more to the fact that the whole train of thought is dominated by the element which has for its content a bodily innervation (or, rather, the sensation of it). Furthermore, a hysterical woman would, in the first example, have *in fact* convulsively twisted her eyes, and, in the second, have given actual jerks, instead of having the *impulse* to do so or the *sensation* of doing so: and in neither example would she have any accompanying conscious thoughts, nor would she have been able to express any such thoughts afterwards.

These two observations, then, argue in favour of what we have called hypochondriacal speech or 'organ-speech'. But, what seems to us more important, they also point to something else, of which we have innumerable instances (for example, in the cases collected in Bleuler's monograph [1911]) and which may be reduced to a definite formula. In schizophrenia *words* are subjected to the same process as that which makes the dream-images out of latent dream-thoughts – to what we have called the primary psychical process. They undergo condensation, and by means of displacement transfer their cathexes to one another in their entirety. The process may go so far that a single word, if it is specially suitable on account of its numerous connections, takes over the representation of a whole train of thought.[20] The works of Bleuler, Jung and their pupils offer a quantity of material which particularly supports this assertion.[21]

Before we draw any conclusion from impressions such as these, let us consider further the distinctions between the formation of substitutes in schizophrenia on the one hand, and in hysteria and obsessional neurosis on the other – subtle distinctions which nevertheless make a strange impression. A patient whom I have at present under observation has allowed himself to be withdrawn from all the interests of life on account of a bad condition of the skin of his face. He declares that he has blackheads and deep holes in his face which everyone notices. Analysis shows that he is playing out his castration complex upon his skin. At first he worked at these blackheads remorselessly; and it gave him great satisfaction to squeeze them out, because, as he said, something spurted out when he did so. Then he began to think that a deep cavity appeared wherever he had got rid of a blackhead, and he reproached himself most vehemently with having ruined his skin for ever by 'constantly fiddling about with his hand'. Pressing out the content of the blackheads is clearly to him a substitute for masturbation. The cavity which then appears owing to his fault is the female genital, i.e. the fulfilment of the threat of castration (or the phantasy representing that threat) provoked by his masturbating. This substitutive formation has, in spite of its hypochondriacal character, considerable resemblance to a hysterical conversion; and yet, we have a feeling that something different must be going on here, that a substitutive formation such as this cannot be attributed to hysteria, even before we can say in what the difference consists. A tiny little cavity such as a pore of the skin would hardly be used by a hysteric as a symbol for the vagina, which he is otherwise ready to compare with every imaginable object that encloses a hollow space. Besides, we should expect the multiplicity of these little cavities to prevent him from using them as a substitute for the female genital. The same applies to the case of a young patient

reported by Tausk some years ago to the Vienna Psycho-Analytical Society. This patient behaved in other respects exactly as though he were suffering from an obsessional neurosis; he took hours to wash and dress, and so on. It was noticeable, however, that he was able to give the meaning of his inhibitions without any resistance. In putting on his stockings, for instance, he was disturbed by the idea that he must pull apart the stitches in the knitting, i.e. the holes, and to him every hole was a symbol of the female genital aperture. This again is a thing which we cannot attribute to an obsessional neurotic. Reitler observed a patient of the latter sort, who also suffered from having to take a long time over putting on his stockings; this man, after overcoming his resistances, found as the explanation that his foot symbolized a penis, that putting on the stocking stood for a masturbatory act, and that he had to keep on pulling the stocking on and off, partly in order to complete the picture of masturbation, and partly in order to undo that act.

If we ask ourselves what it is that gives the character of strangeness to the substitutive formation and the symptom in schizophrenia, we eventually come to realize that it is the predominance of what has to do with words over what has to do with things. As far as the thing goes, there is only a very slight similarity between squeezing out a blackhead and an emission from the penis, and still less similarity between the innumerable shallow pores of the skin and the vagina; but in the former case there is, in both instances, a 'spurting out', while in the latter the cynical saying, 'a hole is a hole', is true verbally. What has dictated the substitution is not the resemblance between the things denoted but the sameness of the words used to express them. Where the two – word and thing – do not coincide, the formation of substitutes in schizophrenia deviates from that in the transference neuroses.

If now we put this finding alongside the hypothesis that in schizophrenia object-cathexes are given up, we shall be obliged to modify the hypothesis by adding that the cathexis of the *word*-presentations of objects is retained. What we have permissibly called the conscious presentation[22] of the object can now be split up into the presentation of the *word* and the presentation of the *thing*; the latter consists in the cathexis, if not of the direct memory-images of the thing, at least of remoter memory-traces derived from these. We now seem to know all at once what the difference is between a conscious and an unconscious presentation [see pp. 316–18]. The two are not, as we supposed, different registrations of the same content in different psychical localities, nor yet different functional states of cathexis in the same locality; but the conscious presentation comprises the presentation of the thing plus the presentation of the word belonging to it, while the unconscious presentation is the presentation of the thing alone. The system *Ucs.* contains the thing-cathexes of the objects, the first and true object-cathexes; the system *Pcs.* comes about by this thing-presentation being hyper-cathected through being linked with the word-presentations corresponding to it. It is these hypercathexes, we may suppose, that bring about a higher psychical organization and make it possible for the primary process to be succeeded by the secondary process which is dominant in the *Pcs.* Now, too, we are in a position to state precisely what it is that repression denies to the rejected presentation in the transference neuroses: what it denies to the presentation is translation into words which shall remain attached to the object. A presentation which is not put into words, or a psychical act which is not hypercathected, remains thereafter in the *Ucs.* in a state of repression.

I should like to point out at what an early date we already possessed the insight which to-day enables us to understand one of the most striking characteristics of schizophrenia. In the last few pages of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which was published in 1900, the view was developed that thought-processes, i.e. those acts of cathexis which are comparatively remote from perception, are in themselves without quality and unconscious, and that they attain their capacity to become conscious only through being linked with the residues of perceptions of *words*.[23] But word-presentations, for their part too, are derived from sense-perceptions, in the same way as thing-presentations are; the question

might therefore be raised why presentations of objects cannot become conscious through the medium of their *own* perceptual residues. Probably, however, thought proceeds in systems so far remote from the original perceptual residues that they have no longer retained anything of the qualities of those residues, and, in order to become conscious, need to be reinforced by new qualities. Moreover, by being linked with words, cathexes can be provided with quality even when they represent only *relations* between presentations of objects and are thus unable to derive any quality from perceptions. Such relations, which become comprehensible only through words, form a major part of our thought-processes. As we can see, being linked with word-presentations is not yet the same thing as becoming conscious, but only makes it possible to become so; it is therefore characteristic of the system *Pcs.* and of that system alone.[24] With these discussions, however, we have evidently departed from our subject proper and find ourselves plunged into problems concerning the preconscious and the conscious, which for good reasons we are reserving for separate treatment.[25]

As regards schizophrenia, which we only touch on here so far as seems indispensable for a general understanding of the *Ucs.*, a doubt must occur to us whether the process here termed repression has anything at all in common with the repression which takes place in the transference neuroses. The formula that repression is a process which occurs between the systems *Ucs.* and *Pcs.* (or *Cs.*), and results in keeping something at a distance from consciousness, must in any event be modified, in order that it may also be able to include the case of dementia praecox and other narcissistic affections. But the ego's attempt at flight, which expresses itself in the withdrawal of the conscious cathexis, nevertheless remains a factor common [to the two classes of neurosis]. The most superficial reflection shows us how much more radically and profoundly this attempt at flight, this flight of the ego, is put into operation in the narcissistic neuroses.

If, in schizophrenia, this flight consists in withdrawal of instinctual cathexis from the points which represent the *unconscious* presentation of the object, it may seem strange that the part of the presentation of this object which belongs to the system *Pcs.* – namely, the word-presentations corresponding to it – should, on the contrary, receive a more intense cathexis. We might rather expect that the word-presentation, being the preconscious part, would have to sustain the first impact of repression and that it would be totally uncathectable after repression had proceeded as far as the unconscious thing-presentations. This, it is true, is difficult to understand. It turns out that the cathexis of the word-presentation is not part of the act of repression, but represents the first of the attempts at recovery or cure which so conspicuously dominate the clinical picture of schizophrenia.[26] These endeavours are directed towards regaining the lost object, and it may well be that to achieve this purpose they set off on a path that leads to the object via the verbal part of it, but then find themselves obliged to be content with words instead of things. It is a general truth that our mental activity moves in two opposite directions: either it starts from the instincts and passes through the system *Ucs.* to conscious thought-activity; or, beginning with an instigation from outside, it passes through the systems *Cs.* and *Pcs.* till it reaches the *Ucs.* cathexes of the ego and objects. This second path must, in spite of the repression which has taken place, remain traversable, and it lies open to some extent to the endeavours made by the neurosis to regain its objects. When we think in abstractions there is a danger that we may neglect the relations of words to unconscious thing-presentations, and it must be confessed that the expression and content of our philosophizing then begins to acquire an unwelcome resemblance to the mode of operation of schizophrenics.[27] We may, on the other hand, attempt a characterization of the schizophrenic's mode of thought by saying that he treats concrete things as though they were abstract.

If we have made a true assessment of the nature of the *Ucs.* and have correctly defined the difference between an unconscious and a preconscious presentation, then our researches will inevitably bring us back from many other points to this same piece of insight.

Translated by James Strachey et al.

Notes

1 [*Editor's note* (James Strachey).] For English readers, it must be observed, there is a further ambiguity in the word 'unconscious' which is scarcely present in the German. The German words '*bewusst*' and '*unbewusst*' have the grammatical form of passive participles, and their usual sense is something like 'consciously known' and 'not consciously known'. The English 'conscious', though it can be used in the same way, is also used, and perhaps more commonly, in an *active* sense: 'he was conscious of the sound' and 'he lay there unconscious'. The German terms do not often have this active meaning, and it is important to bear in mind that 'conscious' is in general to be understood in a passive sense in what follows. The German word '*Bewusstsein*', on the other hand (which is here translated 'consciousness'), *does* have an active sense. Thus, for instance, on page 317 Freud speaks of a psychical act becoming 'an object of consciousness'; again, in the last paragraph of the first section of the paper (page 316) he speaks of 'the perception [of mental processes] by means of consciousness'; and in general, when he uses such phrases as 'our consciousness' he is referring to our consciousness *of* something. When he wishes to speak of a mental state's consciousness in the *passive* sense, he uses the word '*Bewusstheit*', which is translated here 'the attribute of being conscious', 'the fact of being conscious' or simply 'being conscious' – where the English 'conscious' is, as almost always in these papers, to be taken in the passive sense.

2 Freud seems himself at one time to have been inclined to accept this theory, as is suggested by a passage in his book on aphasia, *Zur Auffassung der Aphasien*, Vienna, 1891, pp. 56ff. The passage can be found translated at *SE* XIV, pp. 206–08. [*Editor*: all references to Freud's works are to the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, London: Hogarth Press, 1974, abbreviated to *SE*, followed by the volume number in Roman numerals.]

3 Cf. *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *SE* IV, p. 133.

4 In his very last discussion of the subject, in the unfinished fragment 'Some Elementary Lessons in Psycho-Analysis' (1940), *SE* XXII, pp. 279–86, Freud entered at some length into the evidence afforded by post-hypnotic suggestion.

5 In some of his very early writings, Freud himself used the term 'subconscious', e.g. in his French paper on hysterical paralyses [translated as 'Some Points for a Comparative Study of Organic and Hysterical Motor Paralyses', *SE* I, pp. 157–59] and in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), *SE* II, p. 69n. But he disrecommends the term as early as in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *SE* V, p. 615. He alludes to the point again in 'Resistance and Repression', Lecture XIX of his *Introductory Lectures* (1916–17), *SE* XVI, pp. 286–302, and argues it a little more fully near the end of Chapter II of *The Question of Lay Analysis* (1926), *SE* XX, pp. 191–99.

6 The French term for 'dual consciousness'.

7 This idea had already been dealt with at some length in Chapter VII (F) of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *SE* V, pp. 615–17.

8 Freud had already introduced these abbreviations in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *SE* V, pp. 540ff.

9 See *Studies on Hysteria*, Breuer and Freud (1895), *SE* II, p. 225.

10 By Bleuler (1914). See the 'History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement' (1914), *SE* XIV, p. 41.

11 The German word here is '*Vorstellung*', which covers the English terms 'idea', 'image' and 'presentation'.

12 The conception of an idea being present in the mind in more than one 'registration' was first put forward by Freud in a letter to Fliess of December 6, 1896 (Letter 52, *SE* I, pp. 233–39). It is used in connection with the theory of memory in Chapter VII (Section B) of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *SE* V, p. 539; and it is alluded to again in Section F of the same chapter (ibid., p. 610) in an argument which foreshadows the present one.

13 Freud had himself been much concerned with the question of the localization of cerebral functions in his work on aphasia, *Zur Auffassung der Aphasien*.

14 Freud had insisted on this as early as in his preface to his translation of Bernheim's *De la suggestion* (Freud, 1888–89).

15 The topographical picture of the distinction between conscious and unconscious ideas is presented in Freud's discussion of the case of 'Little Hans' (1909), *SE* X, pp. 120f., and at greater length in the closing paragraphs of his technical paper 'On Beginning the Treatment' (1913), *SE* XII, pp. 121–44.

16 The process is described in detail in Section (a) of Freud's paper on 'Types of Onset of Neurosis' (1912), *SE* XII, pp. 227–38.
17 A paper referring to the same patient was later published by Tausk (1919).
18 The German '*Augenverdreher*' has the figurative meaning of 'deceiver'.
19 Cf. Freud's discussion of hypochondria in the second part of 'On Narcissism' (1914), *SE* XIV, pp. 82–91.
20 *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *SE* V, p. 595.
21 The dream-work, too, occasionally treats words like things, and so creates very similar 'schizophrenic' utterances or neologisms. See *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *SE* IV, pp. 295ff. A distinction between what happens in dreams and in schizophrenia is drawn, however, in 'A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams', p. 229.
22 '*Vorstellung*.' This word has as a rule been translated above by 'idea'. [See note 11 above.] From this point till the end of the paper, '*Vorstellung*' is uniformly translated by 'presentation' – '*Wortvorstellung*' 'presentation of the word' or 'word-presentation'; '*Sachvorstellung*' 'presentation of the thing' or 'thing-presentation'. These words were formerly translated by the somewhat misleading 'verbal idea' and 'concrete idea'. In 'Mourning and Melancholia' (*SE* XIV, p. 256) Freud replaced '*Sachvorstellung*' by the synonymous '*Dingvorstellung*'; and he had used this second version earlier, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *SE* IV, pp. 295–96, and near the beginning of Chapter IV of his book on jokes (1905). The distinction between 'word-presentations' and 'thing-presentations' was already in his mind when he wrote these earlier works, and it no doubt derives from his studies on the aphasias. The matter was discussed at some length in *Zur Auffassung der Aphasien*, and the relevant passage has been translated in *SE* XIV, pp. 209–15.
23 *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *SE* V, p. 617. See also ibid., p. 574. This hypothesis had in fact been put forward (though not published) by Freud even earlier, in his 'Project for a Scientific Psychology' of 1895 (towards the beginning of Section 1 of Part III, *SE* I, pp. 388–91). It had also been mentioned by him more recently, in his paper 'Formulation on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911), *SE* XII, pp. 213–26.
24 Freud took up this subject again at the beginning of Chapter II of *The Ego and the Id* (1923).
25 This seems likely to be a reference to a missing paper on consciousness.
26 See Part III of Freud's Schreber analysis in 'Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia', *SE* XII, pp. 3–82.
27 Freud had already made this point at the end of the second essay in *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13), *SE* XIII, p. 73.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Sigmund Freud in English

Letters of Sigmund Freud 1873–1939, ed. E.L. Freud, trans. T. and J. Stern, London: Hogarth Press, 1961.
Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. J. Strachey, London: Hogarth Press, 1974.
Interpretation of Dreams (1900) (vols IV and V of *Complete Works*), trans. J. Strachey, London: Penguin, 1991.
The Uncanny (1919), trans. D. McLintock, London: Penguin, 2003.
Essentials of Psychoanalysis, ed. A. Freud, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986.
Art and Literature, trans. J. Strachey, London: Penguin, 1991.
On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, ed. A. Richards, trans. J. Strachey, London: Penguin, 1991.
The Unconscious, trans. G. Frankland, London: Penguin, 2005.
The Freud Reader, ed. P. Gay, London: Vintage, 1995.

Further reading

For introductions to Freud, see De Berg (2003), Lear (2005), Thurschwell (2009), and Wollheim (1995). Critical appraisals of the impact of his ideas are offered by Drassinower (2003), Dufresne (1997, 2007), Elliott (1998), Forrester (1997), and Horrocks (2001), with Cioffi (1998) and Dufresne (2003) addressing the scientific

legitimacy of his psychoanalysis. Studies of the place of art and literature in his work are given by Bergstein (2006), Berman (2003), Burke (2006), Farrell (2007), Flieger (1981), Frankland (2000), Jurist (2006), Kofman (1991), Marcuse (1958), Meisel (2006), Møller (1991), Neuringer (1992), Read (1998), Sklarew (1997), Spector (1974), and Wollheim (1970), while Barale and Minazzi (2008) and Cheshire (1996) focus on his attitude to sound and music. Gomez (2005), Mills (2004), Ricoeur (1970), and Wollheim and Hopkins (1982) provide philosophical responses to Freud, with philosophical appraisals of the unconscious offered by Bernet (1996, 2002), Bilsker (1997), Bouveresse (1995), Levy (1996), and McLoughlin (1999). For broader studies of Freud's concept of the unconscious, see Mannoni (1985) and Whyte (1960), and for accounts of the uncanny, see Krell (1992) and Royle (2002).

F. Barale and V. Minazzi, 'Off the beaten track: Freud, sound and music. Statement of a problem and some historico-critical notes', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 2008, vol. 89, pp. 937–57.

H. De Berg, *Freud's Theory and Its Use in Literary and Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003.

M. Bergstein, 'Freud's "Moses of Michelangelo": Vasari, photography, and art historical practice', *Art Bulletin*, 2006, vol. 88, pp. 158–76.

E. Berman, 'Reader and story, viewer and film: on transference and interpretation', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 2003, vol. 84, pp. 119–29.

R. Bernet, 'The unconscious between representation and drive: Freud, Husserl, and Schopenhauer', *Contributions to Phenomenology*, 1996, vol. 23, pp. 81–96.

———, 'Unconscious consciousness in Husserl and Freud', *Phenomenology and Cognitive Sciences*, 2002, vol. 1, pp. 327–51.

R. Bilsker, 'Freud and Schopenhauer: consciousness, unconsciousness, and the drive towards death', *Idealistic Studies*, 1997, vol. 27, pp. 79–90.

J. Bouveresse, *Wittgenstein Reads Freud: The Myth of the Unconscious*, trans. C. Cosman, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.

J. Burke, *The Sphinx on the Table: Sigmund Freud's Art Collection and the Development of Psychoanalysis*, New York: Walker & Company, 2006.

N.M. Cheshire, 'The empire of the ear: Freud's problem with music', *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1996, vol. 77, pp. 1127–68.

F. Cioffi, *Freud and the Question of Pseudoscience*, Peru, Illinois: Open Court, 1998.

A. Drassinower, *Freud's Theory of Culture: Eros, Loss and Politics*, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.

T. Dufresne (ed.), *Returns of the 'French Freud': Freud, Lacan, and Beyond*, New York: Routledge, 1997.

———, *Killing Freud: Twentieth-Century Culture and the Death of Psychoanalysis*, New York: Continuum, 2003.

——— (ed.), *Against Freud: Critics Talk Back*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.

A. Elliott (ed.), *Freud 2000*, Cambridge: Polity, 1998.

J. Farrell, 'The birth of the psychoanalytic hero: Freud's Platonic Leonardo', *Philosophy and Literature*, 2007, vol. 31, pp. 233–54.

J.A. Flieger, 'Proust, Freud, and the art of forgetting', *Substance*, 1981, vol. 29, pp. 66–82.

J. Forrester, *Dispatches from the Freud Wars*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.

G. Frankland, *Freud's Literary Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

L. Gomez, *The Freud Wars: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis*, London: Routledge, 2005.

R. Horrocks, *Freud Revisited: Psychoanalytic Themes in the Postmodern Age*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

E.L. Jurist, 'Art and emotion in psychoanalysis', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 2006, vol. 87, pp. 1315–34.

S. Kofman, *Freud and Fiction*, trans. S. Wykes, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991.

D.F. Krell, '"*Das Unheimliche*": architectural sections of Heidegger and Freud', *Research in Phenomenology*, 1992, vol. 22, pp. 43–61.

J. Lear, *Freud*, New York: Routledge, 2005.

D. Levy, *Freud Among the Philosophers: The Psychoanalytic Unconscious and its Philosophical Critics*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

J. McLoughlin, 'Unwittingly recapitulating Freud: Searle's concept of a vocabulary of the unconscious', *Ratio*, 1999, vol. 12, pp. 34–53.

O. Mannoni, *Freud: The Theory of the Unconscious*, London: Verso, 1985.

L. Marcuse, 'Freud's aesthetics', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1958, vol. 17, pp. 1–21.

P. Meisel, *The Literary Freud*, London and New York: Routledge, 2006.
J. Mills (ed.), *Rereading Freud: Psychoanalysis through Philosophy*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.
L. Møller, *The Freudian Reading: Analytical and Fictional Constructions*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991.
C. Neuringer, 'Freud and the theater', *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, 1992, vol. 20, pp. 142–48.
R. Read, '"Art Today": Stokes, Pound, Freud and the word–image opposition', *Word and Image*, 1998, vol. 14, pp. 227–52.
P. Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, trans. D. Savage, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.
N. Royle, *The Uncanny*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002.
B. Sklarew, 'Freud and film: encounters in the Weltgeist', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 1997, vol. 47, pp. 1238–47.
J.J. Spector, *The Aesthetics of Freud: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Art*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1974.
P. Thurschwell, *Sigmund Freud*, 2nd edition, London: Routledge, 2009.
L.L. Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud*, New York: Basic Books, 1960.
R. Wollheim, 'Freud and the understanding of art', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 1970, vol. 10, pp. 211–24.
———, *Freud (Modern Masters)*, 2nd edition, London: Fontana, 1995.
R. Wollheim and J. Hopkins (eds), *Philosophical Essays on Freud*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Chapter 18

MAURICE BLANCHOT

INTRODUCTION

The *oeuvre* of the French author Maurice Blanchot (1907–2003) might be summed up as a philosophy of uniqueness. To want to sum up Blanchot's output, though, is to be horribly insensitive to the ideas contained in his novels and critical essays. Blanchot is one of the many twentieth-century continentals who use the style of their writing to display or perform their thesis; others include Adorno, Bataille, Deleuze, Derrida, and Irigaray. Often described by commentators as 'limpid', Blanchot's prose is transparent yet winding and liquid, touching upon a subject but always leaving you with the feeling that the question is the answer. He is included in the 'Excess and Affect' section for his avowal of the singularity of the artwork. The question 'what is art?' is a particularly modernist question in the sense that it seeks a realm to call art's own in the face of ever-growing mechanical reproduction. Blanchot's approach is to insist that, if the uniqueness of art is to be ensured, then the question must always remain, to some extent, open. He draws attention to the materiality of writing – the structures and textures inherent in the organization of prose – but, rather than aspiring to a Joycean or Adornian unreadability, he combines lucidity with oxymoron and paradox to thwart the reader's expectations. For example, the artwork is 'a relation with what admits of no relations' and the duplicity of art is 'forgetfulness profoundly forgotten'. To adopt his idiom: the question of the uniqueness of art must always exceed answerability.

'The Original Experience' is from *The Space of Literature* (1955), a collection of essays exploring the question 'what is literature?'. 'Space', as Smock tells us in her 'Translator's Introduction', is a rendering of '*espace*', but should not be taken in the sense of a straightforward 'realm' or 'domain'. Instead, to honour Blanchot's intent, we should think of it as the space of 'interval' or 'withdrawal' – a space which prevents the full meaning and significance of a work ever being available to the reader. The artwork, Blanchot avers, is never something that can be present with itself. Art is caught up in processes and forms of approach which remove or conceal anything that might resemble an essence as soon as one begins to work towards it; it is 'the intertwining of the Yes and of the No, the ebb and flow of the essential ambiguity'. Space is considered in 'The Original Experience' through the motifs of risk, exile, and death. Both 'risk' (from Rilke) and 'exile' (from Saint-John Perse) have the binary characteristics of inclusion and exclusion, and hold their opposites in a tensile relationship. Just as exile thrusts the individual into the realm that a community negates in order to maintain itself, so risk involves placing one's being and possessions outside of oneself in order to reaffirm or consolidate them.

However, it is the indeterminacies surrounding the concept of death which Blanchot uses to keep the question and the space of art open. Death poses a 'radical reversal', a state of undecidability which, he muses, is 'the *original experience* [that] the work [of art] must touch'.

With giddying verbal agility, Blanchot takes us from 'the end' as that which no longer 'gives man the power to end – to limit, to separate, and thus to grasp' to death as 'that which never happens to me, so that never do I die'. Rather, others die. Death is something I can never experience. I might witness the passing of others and experience pain and suffering as my own life draws to a close, but death is never present to me as an event or an appointment. It is simply the absence of my relationships with others. Comparisons can be drawn with Heidegger and Levinas. In *Being and Time*, death is conceptualized by Heidegger not as a realizable, empirical event but as a primordial, impending possibility which we are forever thrown towards; it is, he avows, the opening of the horizon in front of which experience takes place.[1] And for Levinas, in 'Time and the Other', the approach of death becomes a relationship with 'something that is absolutely other' in which the individual is made fully aware of the respect for possibility and contingency there must be if the totalizing, homogenizing tendencies of thought are to be resisted.[2] An inevitability which cannot be experienced but which nevertheless opens up the experience of otherness for us stands, on Blanchot's terms, as the paradox which forever leaves the question of art unanswerable.

Notes

1 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995, §§46–53.
2 E. Levinas, 'Time and the other', *The Levinas Reader*, ed. S. Hand, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, p. 43.

■ ■ ■

THE ORIGINAL EXPERIENCE

MAURICE BLANCHOT

Investigations on the subject of art such as those the esthetician pursues bear no relation to the concern for the work of which we speak. Esthetics talks about art, makes of it an object of reflection and of knowledge. Esthetics explains art by reducing it or then again exalts by elucidating it, but in all events art for the esthetician is a present reality around which he constructs plausible thoughts at no risk.

The work is deeply concerned for art. This is to say that for the work, art is never a given, and that the work can find art only by continuing toward its own completion in radical uncertainty, for it cannot know in advance whether art is what it is. As long as the work can serve art by serving other values, these permit the work to find art without having to seek it, and indeed allow that the finding not even be an issue. A work inspired by faith need not (and should not) trouble about itself. It bears witness to this faith, and if it does so poorly, if it fails, faith is not affected. Today the work has no faith other than itself. And this faith is absolute passion for that which depends upon the work alone to give it life. Yet the work by itself can discover only the absence of art. Perhaps the work has the power to present art, but only if it hides from itself that it is seeking by seeking art where the impossible preserves it. And because of this, when the work takes itself to be the task of grasping art in its essence, the impossible is its task, and the work is only realized as an infinite searching. For the characteristic most proper to the origin is to be always veiled by that of which it is the origin.

In advance of a particular work, does art not exist in other works which have already provided illustrious examples? Did Cézanne not think he encountered it in the Venetian paintings at the Louvre? If Rilke honors Hölderlin, does he not count on him for the certainty that the poem,

that poetry exists? Perhaps Cézanne knows that art dwells in Venice, but the work of Cézanne does not know this. Cézanne spoke of *realization*, the supreme quality, and believed that thus he represented to himself the essence of Venetian art. But his work cannot hold this 'realization' to be essential except by achieving it.

Doubtless one can conceive of such seeking, and describe it and trace the successive steps in what seems to us to be artistic creation. Malraux, for example, has shown that the artist becomes aware of his future work by living in that embodied consciousness of art, so to speak, which the Museum is for him, and which is art, not immobilized in its particular manifestations, but perceived in the changes which make of given works moments in an actual duration, and of art the always incomplete sense of such a movement. This is a significant idea, but mainly it helps us to understand or to imagine how the work is always lacking with respect to itself. For the implication is that, without the collection of all the works which incarnate it in time, art does not exist, yet that art is 'true' only in the work always still to come.

The habits of thought which we owe to the commonplaces of subjective art lead us to believe that the artist or writer seeks to express himself and that for him what is missing from the Museum and from literature is he. What torments him, what he strives to fashion into a work, is said to be this expression of himself which he forms by means of an artistic technique.

Is Cézanne's concern to express himself, to give to art, that is, one more artist? He 'swore to die painting.' Was that just in order to live on? Does he sacrifice himself in this passion which knows no happiness simply so that his paintings might give form to the singular weather of his soul? This much no one can doubt: what he seeks has only one name. Painting. But painting can be found only in the work currently in progress, which demands that he himself exist only in it, and of which all his canvases are only traces, along an infinite road yet to be discovered.

Leonardo da Vinci is another example of this passion which wants to raise the work to the essence of art and which finally perceives in each work only an inconclusive step along the path of a search which we too recognize in the unfinished canvases, the pictures which seem open: this path is now the only essential work. We would certainly misconstrue Leonardo's destiny if we saw him as a painter who did not put his art above everything. He made painting an absolute. Yet it is not his judgments that reveal this to us, not even when he defines painting as 'the greatest spiritual process.' It is rather his anguish, that fright which seized him each time he put himself in front of a canvas. Because of conditions proper to the Renaissance, the search led Leonardo out of painting. But his was a search for art and art alone. The terror of having to realize the unrealizable, the anguish of painting, caused the search to evolve into forgetfulness of what was sought and into the exploration of a pure, useless knowledge in order that the frightful moment of realization become always more distant until the day when, in his notes, this revealing assertion was inscribed: 'One must not desire the impossible.' But why is the impossible what the work desires when it has become concern for its own origin?

Risk

In one of Rilke's letters, addressed to Clara Rilke, we find this answer: 'Works of art are always the products of a danger incurred, of an experience pursued to the end, to the point where man can no longer continue.' The work of art is linked to a risk; it is the affirmation of an extreme experience. But what is this risk? What is the nature of the bond that unites the work to risk?

From the point of view of the work (from the point of view of the requirements which characterize it and which we have described), we clearly see that it demands a sacrifice of him who makes it possible. The poet belongs to the poem; he belongs to it only insofar as he keeps to this free belonging. This relation is not simply the formal devotion which nineteenth-century writers

stress. When it is said of the writer that he must live only in order to write well, or of the artist that he must sacrifice everything to the demands of his art, the perilous urgency, the prodigality of the risk which informs the artist's relation to the work is not expressed at all. The scholar too gives himself entirely to his scholarly task. And morality in general, the call of duty, pronounce the same fanatical decree, ultimately calling upon the individual to sacrifice himself and to perish. But the work is not such an unambiguous value demanding of us that we exhaust ourselves for its sake, for love of it, or out of fidelity to the goal it represents to us. If the artist runs a risk, it is because the work itself is essentially a risk. By belonging to the work, it is likewise to risk that he belongs.

In one of the *Sonnets to Orpheus*, Rilke summons us with these words:

We, we infinitely risked.

Why infinitely? Man is the most precarious of all beings, for he jeopardizes himself. The construction of a world, the transformation of nature through productive activity, only succeeds because of a daring challenge in the course of which everything easy is discounted. However, the goal of a protected, a satisfied and secure life also finds expression in this audacity. Precise tasks and reasonable obligations also speak. Man risks his life, but he does so under the protection of the familiar light of day, in view of the useful, the beneficial, and the true. Sometimes, in revolution, in war, under the pressure of history's development he risks his world, but he always does so in the name of a greater possibility, in order to reduce what exceeds his grasp, protect what he is, ensure the values to which his power is attached – in a word, to domesticate the day and extend it or verify it insofar as is possible.

What is the risk proper to the work when the work has the essence of art for its task? But is such a question not surprising in itself? Doesn't the artist appear to be free of life's burdens, and to bear no responsibility for what he creates? Does he not seem to live at his pleasure in the imaginary where, were he to run a risk, it would still be nothing but an image?

Exile

This is true. When Saint-John Perse named one of his poems *Exile*, he named the poetic condition as well. The poet is in exile; he is exiled from the city, from regular occupations and limited obligations, from everything connected to results, substantive reality, power. The outward aspect of the risk to which the work exposes him is precisely its inoffensive appearance. The poem is inoffensive, which is to say that whoever submits to it is deprived of himself as power, consents to be cast out from his own capability and from all forms of possibility.

The poem is exile, and the poet who belongs to it belongs to the dissatisfaction of exile. He is always lost to himself, outside, far from home; he belongs to the foreign, to the outside which knows no intimacy or limit, and to the separation which Hölderlin names when in his madness he sees rhythm's infinite space.

Exile, the poem then, makes the poet a wanderer, the one always astray, he to whom the stability of presence is not granted and who is deprived of a true abode. And this must be understood in the gravest sense: the artist does not belong to truth because the work is itself what escapes the movement of the true. For always, whatever our perspective upon it, it revokes the true, eludes signification, designating that region where nothing subsists, where what takes place has nevertheless not taken place, where what begins over has never begun. It points into the realm of the most dangerous indecision, toward the confusion from which nothing emerges. This eternal outside is quite well evoked by the image of the *exterior* darkness where man withstands that which the true must negate in order to become possibility and progress.

Error is the risk which awaits the poet and which, behind him, awaits every man who writes dependent upon an essential work. Error means wandering, the inability to abide and stay. For where the wanderer is, the conditions of a definitive here are lacking. In this absence of here and now what happens does not clearly come to pass as an event based upon which something solid could be achieved. Consequently, what happens does not happen, but does not pass either, into the past; it is never passed. It happens and recurs without cease; it is the horror and the confusion and the uncertainty of eternal repetition. It is not one truth or another that lacks, or truth in general; nor is it doubt that leads us on or despair that immobilizes us. The wanderer's country is not truth, but exile; he lives outside, on the other side which is by no means a beyond, rather the contrary. He remains separated, where the deep of dissimulation reigns, that elemental obscurity through which no way can be made and which because of that makes its awful way through him.

What man risks when he belongs to the work and when the work is the search for art is, then, the most extreme thing he could risk: not just his life, not only the world where he dwells, but his essence, his right to truth, and, even more, his right to death. He departs; he becomes, as Hölderlin calls him, the migrator – he who, like the priests of Dionysos, wanders from country to country in the sacred night. This errant migration can sometimes lead him to insignificance, to the facile contentment of a life crowned with approval, the platitudes of honorific irresponsibility. Sometimes it leads him into wretched vagrancy which is only the instability of a life bereft of a work. And sometimes it takes him to the deep where everything wavers, where everything meaningful is undermined, destabilized, where this upheaval ruins the work and hides in forgetfulness.

In the poem it is not any particular individual who risks himself alone, or a particular mind that is exposed to the touch and the burn of darkness. The risk is more essential. It is the danger of dangers by which, each time, the essence of language is radically placed in doubt. To risk language: this is one of the forms of this risk. To risk being – the word uttered when absence is spoken, and which the work pronounces by pronouncing the word *beginning* – this is the other form of the risk. In the work of art, being is risked. For whereas in the world where beings repel it in order to be, being is always concealed, negated, and denied (and thus protected too), in dissimulation's realm that which is concealed tends, on the contrary, to emerge, deep down in appearance, and that which is negated becomes the excess in affirmation. But this appearance reveals nothing, nothing is affirmed by this affirmation which is only the unstable position from which, if the work succeeds in containing it, the true will be able to take *place*.

The work draws light from the dark; it is a relation with what admits of no relations; it encounters being before the encounter is possible and where truth lacks. This is the essential risk. Here we reach the abyss. Here we bind ourselves, with a bond which cannot be too strong, to the nontrue, and to it we seek to bind an essential form of authenticity. This is what Nietzsche suggests when he says, 'We have art so as not to go under [touch the bottom] on account of truth.'[1]

He does not mean, as a superficial interpretation would have it, that art is the illusion which protects us against the mortal truth. He says with more certainty: we have art in order that what makes us go all the way to the bottom not belong to the domain of truth. The very bottom, the bottomless abyss belongs to art. And art is that deep which is *sometimes* the absence of profundity, of the foundation, the pure void bereft of importance, and sometimes that upon which a foundation can be given, but it is also *always at the same time* one and the other, the intertwining of the Yes and of the No, the ebb and flow of the essential ambiguity. And that is why all works of art and all literary works seem to leave comprehension behind and yet seem never to reach it, so that it must be said of them that they are always understood too much and always too little.

Let us try to investigate with more precision what happens to us because 'we have art.' And what is necessary in order that we have art? What is the meaning of this possibility? We still

barely glimpse the implications of such questions, which have arisen in the work only since it has had art's essence for its task. And do we have art? The question remains undecided from the moment, precisely, when what must speak in the work is its origin.

The radical reversal

When a contemporary philosopher names death as man's extreme possibility, the possibility absolutely proper to him, he shows that the origin of possibility is linked in man to the fact that he *can* die, that for him death is yet one possibility more, that the event by which man departs from the possible and belongs to the impossible is nevertheless within his mastery, that it is the extreme moment of his possibility. (And this the philosopher expresses precisely by saying of death that it is 'the possibility of impossibility.')[2] Hegel had already seen action, language, liberty, and death to be aspects of one and the same movement; he had shown that only man's constant and resolute proximity to death allows him to become active nothingness capable of negating and transforming natural reality – of combating, of laboring, of knowing, and of being historical. This is a magical force: it is the absolute power of the negative which becomes the action of truth in the world. It brings negation to reality, form to the formless, definition to the indefinite. We want to draw these limits, mark these ends, come to the finish. That is the principle behind civilization's demands, the essence of the purposeful will which seeks achievement, which demands accomplishment and attains universal mastery. Existence is authentic when it is capable of enduring possibility right up to its extreme point, able to stride toward death as toward possibility par excellence. It is to this movement that the essence of man in Western history owes its having become action, value, future, labor and truth. The affirmation that in man all is possibility requires that death itself be possible: death itself, without which man would not be able to form the notion of an 'all' or to exist in view of a totality, must be what makes all – what makes totality – possible.

But what is art, and what can we say of literature? The question returns now with a particular violence. If we have art – which is exile from truth, which is the risk of an inoffensive game, which affirms man's belonging to the limitless outside where intimacy is unknown, where he is banished from his capability and from all forms of possibility – how does this come about? How, if he is altogether possibility, can man allow himself anything resembling art? If he has art, does this not mean that, contrary to his apparently authentic definition – the requirement which is in harmony with the law of the day – he entertains with death a relation which is not that of possibility, which does not lead to mastery or to understanding or to the progressive achievements of time, but exposes him to a radical reversal? *This reversal*: would it not seem to be the *original experience* which the work must touch, upon which it closes and which constantly threatens to close in upon art and withhold it? The end, in this perspective, would no longer be that which gives man the power to end – to limit, separate, and thus to grasp – but the infinite: the dreadful infinitude on account of which the end can never be overcome. Death, then, would not be 'the possibility absolutely proper to man,' my own death, that unique event which answers Rilke's prayer: 'O Lord, grant to each his own death,' but on the contrary, that which never happens to me, so that never do I die, but rather 'they die.' Men die always other than themselves, at the level of the neutrality and the impersonality of the eternal They.

The characteristics of this reversal can only be recalled briefly here.

They die: this is not a reassuring formula designed to put off the fearsome moment. *They die*: he who dies is anonymous, and anonymity is the guise in which the ungraspable, the unlimited, the unsituated is most dangerously affirmed among us. Whoever experiences this suffers an anonymous, impersonal force, the force of an event which, being the dissolution of every event,

is starting over not only now, but was in its very beginning a beginning again. And in its domain everything that happens happens over again. From the instant 'they die,' the instant is revoked. When someone dies, 'when' designates not a particular date but no matter what date. Likewise there is a level of this experience at which death reveals its nature by appearing no longer as the demise of a particular person, or as death in general, but in this neutral form: someone or other's death. Death is always nondescript. Hence the feeling that the special signs of affection which those who were close to a person recently departed still show him are out of place. For now there is no more distinction to be made between close and distant. The only appropriate tears are impersonal ones, the general sadness of official mourners delegated by the indifference of the They. Death is public. If this does not mean that it is the sheer exteriorization which the spectacular side of death as ceremony expresses, one feels nonetheless at such spectacles how much death becomes indistinct and unmasterable *error*, the shifty point from which indetermination condemns time to the exhausting futility of repetition.

The experience of art

To the poet, to the artist this summons makes itself heard: 'Be dead evermore in Eurydice.'[3] This dramatic command apparently implies a reassuring other half: Be dead evermore in Eurydice so as to be alive in Orpheus. Art brings duplicity with it. This duplicity allows it to escape its own risk. It can always extricate itself by transforming the risk into security. Then it partakes of the world – of the world's successes and advantages – without incurring its obligations. Thus does art plunge into the other risk, the one which is without danger, which signifies only the unperceived loss of art, brilliant insignificance, tranquil talk wreathed in honors.

The duplicity cannot be outdone. But it must be suffered in all its depth. The duplicity of the happy dream which invites us to die sadly in Eurydice so as to survive gloriously in Orpheus is concealment concealing itself; it is forgetfulness profoundly forgotten. Yet behind this facile forgetting which arranges for us to obtain the satisfactions of glory, the fundamental duplicity is at work as well. It detaches us from all power. Now the happy dream is not so happy: it turns into a nightmare, it falls away in confusion and misery. The inessential, the complacent lightness becomes the unbearable loss of essence; beauty withers into error, error opens onto exile – onto migration outside, where there is neither intimacy nor rest. *Be dead evermore in Eurydice*. Yes, such is the call, such the command. But deep in this order 'dead evermore' is echoed by 'alive forever,' and here 'alive' does not signify life, but – in the guise of a reassuring ambiguity – the loss of the power to die, the loss of death as power and possibility. It signifies the essential sacrifice: the radical reversal which Rilke, who perhaps always sought to outwit it, expresses without grasping all the implications of what he writes, in a letter of January 6, 1923. He asks to see no longer in death something negative, but 'das Wort Tod ohne Negation zu lesen.' To read the word death *without* negation is to withdraw from it the cutting edge of decision and the power to negate; it is to cut oneself off from possibility and the true, but also from death as true event. It is to surrender to the indistinct and the undetermined, to the emptiness anterior to events, where the end has all the heaviness of starting over.

This experience is the experience of art. Art – as images, as words, and as rhythm – indicates the menacing proximity of a vague and vacant outside, a neutral existence, nil and limitless; art points into a sordid absence, a suffocating condensation where being ceaselessly perpetuates itself as nothingness.

Art is originally linked to this fund of impotence where everything falls back when the possible is attenuated. In the world, decisive affirmation dependably serves truth as a basis and foundation, as the place from which it can arise. By comparison, art originally represents the scandalous

intimation of absolute error: the premonition of something not true but whose 'not' does not have the decisive character of a limit, for it is, rather, brimming and endless indeterminacy with which the true cannot communicate. Nor does truth by any means have the power to reconquer it. The true cannot define itself vis-à-vis this 'not' except by becoming the violence of the negative.

If the essential task of the true is to negate, this is because error *affirms* in the profuse plenitude which is its preserve outside of time and in all times. This affirmation is the perpetuity of what admits neither of beginning nor of end. It is neither productive nor destructive but stagnant; it is that which has never come, which is neither staunched nor spurting forth but coming back – the eternal lapping of return. It is in this sense that in art's milieu there is a pact contracted with death, with repetition, and with failure. Beginning again, repetition, the fatal return – everything evoked by experiences where estrangement is allied with the strangely familiar, where the irremediable takes the form of an endless repetition, where the same is posed in the dizziness of redoubling, where there is no cognition but only recognition – all this alludes to that initial error which might be expressed as follows: what is first is not beginning, but beginning over, and being is precisely the *impossibility* of being for the first time.

One could bring this movement more sharply into focus – but not explain it – by evoking those forms and those crises called 'complexes.' Their essence is that at the moment they come about they have already done so: they only ever return. This is their characteristic feature. They are the experience of beginning again. 'Again, again!' is the cry of anguish struggling with the irremediable, with being. Again, again, such is the closed wound of the complex. It takes place again, it recurs, yet another time. The basis of failure lies, not in the fact that an experience meets with no success, but in its beginning all over again. Everything begins again always – yes, one more time, again, again.

Some time ago now, Freud, surprised by the tendency to repeat, the powerful call of the anterior, recognized in it the call of death itself. But perhaps what must finally come out is this: he who seeks in death the meaning of repetition is also led to ruin death as possibility – to bind it in repetition's spell. Yes, we are tied to disaster, but when failure returns, it must be understood as nothing but the return. The power that begins everything over again is older than the beginning: this is the error of our death.

A return to the question

We come here to the point where the question which has been asked of us makes the contradiction, to which every answer returns, emerge in all its force. What the work says is the word *beginning*. But today the work is the work of art: art is its starting point. And it says 'the beginning' when it says 'art,' which is its origin and whose essence has become its task. But where has art led us? To a time before the world, before the beginning. It has cast us out of our power to begin and to end; it has turned us toward the outside where there is no intimacy, no place to rest. It has led us into the infinite migration of error. For we seek art's essence, and it lies where the nontrue admits of nothing essential. We appeal to art's sovereignty: it ruins the kingdom. It ruins the origin by returning to it the errant immensity of directionless eternity. The work says the word *beginning* from a starting point – art – which is complicit with the futility of starting over. The work declares being – and says choice, mastery, form – by announcing art which says the fatality of being, says passivity and formless prolixity. At the very moment of the choice art still holds us back in a primordial Yes and No. There, before any beginning, the somber ebb and flow of dissimulation rumbles.

Such is the question. It asks not to be overcome. That the work is able to pronounce the work *beginning* precisely because the origin attracts it to the place where it risks utter ruin, and because, precisely, it must escape *with a leap* the implacable insistence of something having

neither beginning nor end: this might well be said. And likewise this: that the work is this leap and that it immobilizes itself mysteriously between the truth which does not belong to it and the prolixity of the unrevealable which would prevent it from belonging to itself – that it hovers between death as the possibility of understanding and death as the horror of impossibility. Moreover, the work's successful completion so close to the indefinite and the formless glorifies the proportion in it and makes its coherence, exactitude, and limit all the more impressive. Indeed, all this can be said. And it would all form the elements of an answer. But what does the answer mean as long as in it there remains this question: Do we have art? To this query there can be no decisive answer, at least not to the extent that the work's origin is its concern and that its task is the essence of what verges on the inessential.

We asked ourselves: 'Why, when history contests it, does art tend to become essential presence?' What does this presence mean? Is it only the artistic form of what contests art, the affirmation of art's poverty reversed? Or does the desolate voice which asks, 'What use are poets in time of distress?' – does the distress toward which this question points mysteriously – express the essence of art more profoundly, so that in such a presence art could no longer be anything, save its own absence? But what is the time of distress?

This expression is borrowed from the elegy *Bread and Wine* by Hölderlin:

> In these times, very often it seems to me
> Better to sleep than to be so without companions
> And to wait so; what is there to do in these times, what to say?
> I do not know; what use are poets in time of distress?[4]

What is this time during which, as René Char says as well, 'the sole certainty which we possess of tomorrow's reality … the perfected form of the secret where we come to refresh ourselves, take precautions and sleep'? What is this time when poetry can only say: *what use are poets*? The elegy answers us with these other lines which precede a bit those we have just cited:

> From time to time man bears the divine plenitude.
> A dream of these times, that is what life is afterwards. But error
> Helps, like sleep, and distress makes us strong as does night.

It seems that art owes the strangest of torments and the very grave passion that animate it to the disappearance of the historical forms of the divine. Art was the language of the gods. The gods having disappeared, it became the language in which their disappearance was expressed, then the language in which this disappearance itself ceased to appear. This forgetfulness now speaks all alone. The deeper the forgetfulness, the more the deep speaks in this language, and the more the abyss of this deepness can become the hearing of the word.

Forgetting, error, the unhappiness of erring can be linked to an historical period: to the time of distress when the gods are absent twice over, because they are no longer there, because they are not there yet. This vacant time is that of error, where we do nothing but err because we lack the certitude of presence and the conditions of a true here. And nevertheless error helps us, 'das Irrsal hilft.' Elsewhere, in the variant of the poem *Dichterberuf*, Hölderlin says likewise that God's lack, his default helps us: 'Gottes Fehl hilft.' What does this mean?

The force, the risk proper to the poet is to dwell in God's default, the region where truth lacks. *The time of distress* designates the time which in all times is proper to art. But when historically the gods lack and the world of truth wavers, the time of distress emerges in the work as concern – the concern in which the work finds its preserve – threatening it: making

it present and visible. The time of art is the time before time. The collective presence of the divine evokes this time by hiding it; history and the productive movement of history revoke it by denying it, and the work shows it, in the distress of the *What use?* as that which hides deep down in appearance, reappears in the heart of disappearance, comes to pass in the proximity and under the threat of a radical reversal, the reversal at work when 'they die.' Perpetuating being in the form of nothingness, this reversal changes light into fascination, the object into the image, and it makes us into the empty center of eternal repetition.

And yet 'error helps us.' It is the intimation in waiting, the deep of sleep keeping watch, the silent void of sacred memory. The poet is the intimacy of distress. He alone profoundly lives the empty time of absence, and in him error becomes straying's profundity, night becomes the *other* night. But what does this mean? When René Char writes, 'May risk light your way'; when Georges Bataille, comparing fortune and poetry says, 'The absence of poetry is misfortune'; when Hölderlin calls the empty, distressful present 'bountiful suffering, bountiful happiness,' what is seeking to express itself in these words? Why should our light come from risk? Why should the time of distress be the fortunate time? When Hölderlin speaks of poets who, like the priests of Bacchus, go wandering from country to country in the sacred night, is this perpetual departure, the *sorrow of straying* which has no place to arrive, to rest, also the *fecund migration*, the movement which mediates, that which makes of rivers a language and of language the dwelling, the power by which day abides and is our abode?

So then, is the work really the marvel of the beginning, in which error's indefiniteness would preserve us from inauthenticity's fraud? And is the nontrue an essential form of authenticity?[5] In that case, we do, then, have the work? We have art?

To this question there can be no response. The poem is the answer's absence. The poet is one who, through his sacrifice, keeps the question open in his work. At every time he lives the time of distress, and his time is always the empty time when what he must live is the double infidelity: that of men, that of the gods – and also the double absence of the gods who are no longer and who are not yet. The poem's space is entirely represented by this *and*, which indicates the double absence, the separation at its most tragic instant. But as for whether it is the *and* that unites and binds together, the pure word in which the void of the past and the void of the future become true presence, the 'now' of dawn – this question is reserved in the work. It is that which reveals itself in the work by returning to concealment, to the distress of forgetting. That is why the poem is solitude's poverty. This solitude is a grasp of the future, but a powerless grasp: prophetic isolation which, before time, ever announces the beginning.

Translated by Ann Smock

Notes

1 'Wir haben die Kunst, damit wir nicht an der Wahrheit zu Grunde gehen.'

2 Emmanuel Levinas is the first to have brought out what was at stake in this expression (*Time and the Other*, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1990).

3 Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, XII, Pt. 2.

4 *In dürftiger Zeit*. The German expression is tougher and drier than the French [*au temps de détresse*]. It announces that toughness, that rigor with which the late Hölderlin defends himself against his yearning for the gods who have withdrawn, and maintains the distinction between the spheres – the one above and the one here below. With this distinction, Hölderlin maintains the purity of the sacred realm left empty by the double infidelity of men and gods. For the sacred is this very void, the sheer void of the interval which must be kept pure and empty according to the ultimate requirement: 'Preserve God with the purity of what distinguishes.'

5 To present this question in a context closer to historical actuality, one might say: the more the world is affirmed as the future and the broad daylight of truth, where everything will have value, bear meaning, where the whole will be achieved under the mastery of man and for his use, the more it seems that art must descend toward that point where nothing has meaning yet, the more it matters that art maintain the movement, the insecurity and the grief of that which escapes every grasp and all ends. The artist and the poet seem to have received this mission: to call us obstinately back to error, to turn us toward that space where everything we propose, everything we have acquired, everything we are, all that opens upon the earth and in the sky, returns to insignificance, and where what approaches is the nonserious and the nontrue, as if perhaps thence sprang the source of all authenticity.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Maurice Blanchot in English

Faux Pas (1943), trans. C. Mandell, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
Death Sentence (1948), trans. L. Davis, New York: Station Hill, 1978.
Lautréamont and Sade (1949), trans. S. Kendall and M. Kendall, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.
The Work of Fire (1949), trans. C. Mandell, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.
Thomas the Obscure (1950), trans. R. Lemerton, New York: Station Hill, 1988.
When the Time Comes (1951), trans. L. Davis, New York: Station Hill, 1985.
The One Who Was Standing Apart From Me (1953), trans. L. Davis, New York: Station Hill, 1989.
The Space of Literature (1955), trans. A. Smock, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982.
The Last Man (1957), trans. L. Davis, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.
The Infinite Conversation (1969), trans. S. Hanson, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.
Friendship (1971), trans. E. Rottenberg, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.
The Madness of the Day (1973), trans. L. Davis, New York: Station Hill, 1981.
The Step Not Beyond (1973), trans. L. Nelson, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.
The Writing of the Disaster (1980), trans. A. Smock, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982.
The Unavowable Community (1983), trans. P. Joris, New York: Station Hill, 1988.
The Gaze of Orpheus and Other Literary Essays, ed. P. Adams Sitney, trans. L. Davis, New York: Station Hill, 1981.
The Sirens' Song: Selected Essays, ed. G. Josipovici, trans. S. Rabinovitch, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982; Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982.
Vicious Circles, trans. P. Auster, New York: Station Hill, 1985.
Foucault/Blanchot: Maurice Blanchot: The Thought From Outside; Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him (with Michel Foucault; 1986), New York: Zone Books, 1987.
The Instant of My Death; Demeure: Fiction and Testimony (with Jacques Derrida), trans. E. Rottenberg, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
A Voice From Elsewhere (2002), trans. C. Mandell, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007.
The Blanchot Reader, ed. M. Holland, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
The Station Hill Blanchot Reader: Fiction and Literary Essays, ed. G. Quasha, New York: Station Hill, 1998.

Further reading

Haase and Large (2001) provide a comprehensive introduction to Blanchot, while Hart and Hartman (2004), Hill *et al.* (2006), Holland and Hill (2008), and Pepper (1998) offer collections with a range of perspectives on his work. Blanchot on writing and literature is examined by Gallop (1981), George (2006), Gill (1996), Gregg (1994), Hewson (2004), Large (1999, 2005), Michaud (2002), Schwartz (1998), Shaviro (1990), Stoekl (1985), Suglia (2002), and Weller (2008). The various ways in which Blanchot and philosophy intersect are explored by Bruns (1997), Iyer (2001), Kaufman (2001), and Wall (1999). Hess (1999) and Hill (1997) discuss the political dimensions of his thought, while ethical and theological implications are considered by Hart (2004) and Iyer (2005).

G.L. Bruns, *Maurice Blanchot: The Refusal of Philosophy*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
J. Gallop, *Intersections: A Reading of Sade with Bataille, Blanchot, and Klossowski*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981.
T.D. George, 'The worklessness of literature: Blanchot, Hegel, and the ambiguity of the poetic word', *Philosophy Today*, 2006, vol. 50, pp. 39–47.
C.B. Gill (ed.), *Maurice Blanchot: The Demand of Writing*, London: Routledge, 1996.
J. Gregg, *Maurice Blanchot and the Literature of Transgression*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
U. Haase and W. Large, *Maurice Blanchot*, London: Routledge, 2001.
K. Hart, *The Dark Gaze: Maurice Blanchot and the Sacred*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
K. Hart and G.H. Hartman (eds), *The Power of Contestation: Perspectives on Maurice Blanchot*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.
D.M. Hess, *Politics and Literature: The Case of Maurice Blanchot*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1999.
M. Hewson, 'Blanchot's reading of modernity', *Arcadia*, 2004, vol. 39, pp. 136–47.
L. Hill, *Blanchot: Extreme Contemporary*, London: Routledge, 1997.
L. Hill, B. Nelson, and D. Vardoulakis (eds), *After Blanchot: Literature, Criticism, Philosophy*, Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2006.
M. Holland and L. Hill (eds), *Blanchot's Epoch*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
L. Iyer, 'The sphinx's gaze: art, friendship, and the philosophical in Blanchot and Levinas', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 2001, vol. 39, pp. 189–206.
———, *Blanchot's Vigilance: Literature, Phenomenology and the Ethical*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
E. Kaufman, *The Delirium of Praise: Bataille, Blanchot, Deleuze, Foucault, Klossowski*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
W. Large, 'Maurice Blanchot and the question of literature', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 1999, vol. 30, pp. 88–96.
———, *Emmanuel Levinas and Maurice Blanchot: Ethics and the Ambiguity of Writing*, Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2005.
G. Michaud, 'Literature in secret: Crossing Derrida and Blanchot', *Angelaki*, 2002, vol. 7, pp. 69–90.
T. Pepper (ed.), *The Place of Maurice Blanchot* (*Yale French Studies*, vol. 93), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
S.A. Schwartz, '*Faux pas*: Maurice Blanchot on the ontology of literature', *Sub-Stance*, 1998, vol. 85, pp. 19–47.
S. Shaviro, *Passion and Excess: Blanchot, Bataille, and Literary Theory*, Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1990.
A. Stoekl, *Politics, Writing, Mutilation: The Case of Bataille, Blanchot, Roussel, Leiris, and Ponge*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.
J. Suglia, 'On the question of authorship in Maurice Blanchot', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 2002, vol. 76, pp. 237–53.
T.C. Wall, *Radical Passivity: Levinas, Blanchot, and Agamben*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1999.
S. Weller, '"This word": Maurice Blanchot, literature, and nihilism', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 2008, vol. 44, pp. 307–21.

Chapter 19

GEORGES BATAILLE

INTRODUCTION

Through his writing, the theorist and critic Georges Bataille (1897–1962) commits transgression. Bataille's principal themes are the concept of 'boundary' and the way in which moral, political, and epistemological boundaries are constructed within society. These areas are explored by Bataille himself 'exceeding the limit' and transgressing certain boundaries, e.g. working across a number of literary genres – fiction, autobiography, criticism, philosophy – and by dealing with images of horror, obscenity, and material baseness. The latter aspect has earned him considerable controversy, and prompted many, including André Breton, to place his sanity in doubt. The removal of a priest's eye and its insertion first in the anus and then in the vagina of one of the central characters is the end-point of a series of physical and sexual extremes in Bataille's first published work, the novel *Story of the Eye* (*Histoire de l'Oeil*), issued in 1928 under the pseudonym Lord Auch. Through transgression, Bataille seeks to disclose the conflicts and aporias which define human values and institutions. It is our reactions to images like these which make social norms tangible. Why we react the way we do, including our labels 'horrific' and 'obscene', is an expression of a value system. Insanity is not an explanation. Like chasing a bump in a carpet round the room, the charge of 'insanity' simply moves the issue to another area in the fabric of societal construction: from definitions of 'acceptable images' to definitions of 'acceptable forms of conduct'.

Questions regarding the obscene and the pornographic belong to a debate in aesthetics initiated by Plato. In Plato's *Republic*, imagery, morality, and the right to have a place within the state are all integrated on the understanding that there is a two-way relation of imitation between art and life: art imitates life, and life imitates art. Individuals responsible for representations which do *not* depict the true or the honourable life, e.g. painters, tragic poets, should be banished from the state, Plato argues, on the grounds that some might accept their work as templates for false or dishonourable existence.

The featured essay from Bataille, 'Sanctity, Eroticism and Solitude' (1955), offers a giddying display of transgression within transgression. On the one hand, there are claims to the effect that it is impossible for language, or any other organized system, to embrace its opposite while, on the other, there are passages demonstrating that transgression itself only reinstitutes the contradictions of the very system it is trying to evade. Both sanctity and eroticism, for Bataille, are forms of transgression. Sanctity is the ritualistic apprehension of a sacred reality which can overwhelm us, and eroticism is the solitary transgression of sexual taboos. However, they lead to an impasse. While eroticism frees us from social restraint, it is nevertheless a solitary activity and so can release us 'only by separating us from everybody else'. And with Christian sanctity, although the Crucifixion redeems us, it is also 'that which ought not to have taken place'. The impasse arises

because 'permitted' and 'forbidden' are mutually defining terms. Any set of principles definitive of thought or behaviour, Bataille suggests, cannot avoid instituting against itself a region which it can never enter or to which it can never apply. Therefore, transgression, crossing into the region of unacceptability, is necessarily *invited* as a consequence and, as such, is complicit with the order it eludes: 'Christianity invented the only path of transgression that still permitted discussion.' Bataille though asks us to treat his words with caution, for his own writing cannot avoid these contradictions. He is writing a homage to silence, a plea among philosophers for solitude.

The essay is ahead of its time in anticipating the importance deconstruction will assign (fifteen or so years later) to the textual instabilities implicit in binary oppositions, such as '*within* limits, *without* limits'. The paper is also, in parts, a rejoinder to Hegel. Whereas Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* reduces materiality to an opacity of thought which is eventually overcome by reason, Bataille insists that there is always a level of base, material existence which exceeds thought. The rigour and discipline which define philosophical method prevent it from embracing the extremes of human life. Consequently, although it might aspire to be 'the sum of *knowledge*', as Hegel envisages the subject, philosophy can never be 'the sum of *experiences*'. Sartre is also in evidence here with the admission, from Bataille, that the philosopher, despite leading a disciplined life, nevertheless faces an 'overflowing' of possible experiences to which no rational guidance is adequate.

■ ■ ■

SANCTITY, EROTICISM AND SOLITUDE

GEORGES BATAILLE

Today I wish to discuss sanctity, eroticism and solitude.[1] Before I come to lay certain ideas coherently before you, let me say a word about my intention, which you may find surprising. The word 'eroticism' is ambiguously suggestive. I should like just to say why I have decided to discuss eroticism, sanctity and solitude in the same breath.

My starting point is that eroticism is a solitary activity. At the least it is a matter difficult to discuss. For not only conventional reasons, eroticism is defined by secrecy. It cannot be public. I might instance some exceptions but somehow eroticism is outside ordinary life. In our experience taken as a whole it is cut off from the normal communication of emotions. There is a taboo in force. Nothing is absolutely forbidden, for there are always transgressions. But the taboo is sufficiently active for me to be able to say by and large that eroticism, perhaps the most intense of emotions, is as if it did not exist as far as our existence is present for us in the form of speech and language. These days the taboo has been attenuated somewhat – otherwise I could not be talking to you today – but I think that just the same, since this hall belongs to the world of speech, eroticism must remain something exterior as far as we are concerned. Talk about it I shall, but as something beyond our present set of experiences, as a beyond accessible on one condition only, that we leave the world we now inhabit to shut ourselves up in solitude. Particularly it seems to me that to reach this beyond, we must renounce the philosophical attitude. The philosopher can speak of everything he feels. Erotic experience will commit us to silence.

This is not true of an experience possibly very close to it[:] the experience of sanctity. The emotions felt in that experience can be expressed in a speech or form the subject of a sermon. Yet erotic experience is possibly close to sanctity.

I do not mean that eroticism and sanctity are of the same nature, and anyway that subject falls outside my scope. All I mean is that both experiences have an extreme intensity. When I

speak of sanctity I am referring to the life that the presence of a sacred reality within us informs, a reality that may completely overwhelm us. Just now I shall be content to look at the emotion of sanctity on the one hand and at the emotion of eroticism on the other, in so far as each has extreme intensity. My meaning is that with these two emotions one brings us closer to other men and the other cuts us off from them and leaves us in solitude.

That is the starting point of the argument I want to lay before you. I shall not speak from the philosophical standpoint as it is usually understood. Let me affirm here and now that the philosophical experience as such excludes both these emotions. I agree that the philosopher's experience is a separate one, untouched by other experiences – a specialist's experience, in fact. Emotions put it out of joint. I have long been struck by one thing. The true philosopher must devote his life to philosophy. In the practice of philosophy there is no serious reason why we should not find the weakness common to all cognitive activity – superiority in one field bought at the expense of relative ignorance in other fields. The situation gets worse every day; every day it becomes harder to acquire the sum of human knowledge since this sum is always and unendingly on the increase. The principle that philosophy should be this sum of knowledge treated not simply as a juxtaposition of facts in the memory but as a synthesising operation is still retained, but with great difficulty; every day philosophy becomes a little more of a specialised discipline like the others. It is not my purpose today to discuss the impossibility of constructing a philosophy independent of political experience, except to say that this is a characteristic orientation of contemporary philosophy. On this point philosophy has opened its doors to experience. But once this principle has been admitted, philosophy is still commonly studied in a vacuum. I mean that it is difficult to live and to philosophise simultaneously. I mean that humanity is made up of separate experiences and philosophy is only one experience among others. Philosophy finds it harder and harder to be the sum of knowledge, but it does not even aim at being the sum of experiences, in the specialist's peculiar narrow-mindedness. Yet what significance can the reflections of mankind upon himself and on being in general have, if they take no account of the intense emotional states? Obviously this implies the specialisation of something which by definition may on no account be allowed to be anything but total and universal. Obviously philosophy can only be the sum of the possibles in the sense of a synthesis, or nothing.

I repeat: philosophy is the sum of the possibles in the sense of a synthesis, or nothing.

This, I think, is what it was for Hegel. Erotic experience, at least in the first forms of his dialectic construction, had an overt share in the elaboration of the system, but it is not impossible to believe that it secretly had a deeper influence. Eroticism can only be envisaged dialectically, and conversely the dialectician, if he does not confine himself to formalism, necessarily has his eyes fixed on his own sexual experience. However that may be (and I do admit that one may hesitate faced with this somewhat obscure point), it seems that in part at least Hegel drew his peculiar dialectic from his theological knowledge as well as from his knowledge of Meister Eckhart and Jacob Boehme. But I have not brought Hegel into the discussion in order to insist on the value of his philosophy. On the contrary, in spite of my reservations I intend to assign Hegel deliberately to specialised philosophy. Besides, I only need to remind you how strongly he opposed that tendency of contemporary romantic philosophy to assert that anyone could be a philosopher with no special preparation. I do not say that he was wrong to blame improvisation in the sphere of philosophy; that would be out of the question. But Hegel's practically impenetrable system, even if it were the ultimate in philosophy, certainly has this quality of specialised discipline. It assembles ideas, but at the same time cuts those assembled ideas off from experience. That no doubt was his ambition, for in Hegel's mind the immediate is bad, and Hegel would certainly have identified what I call experience with the immediate. Nevertheless, without embarking on a philosophical discussion I should like to stress the fact that Hegel's argument rings like

a specialised activity. I do not think that he can have helped feeling this himself. In order to counter objections in advance he contended that philosophy was a development in time, a speech delivered in successive phases. Everybody can agree with this, but it means making a special moment subordinate to the others out of each moment of philosophy. Thus we only abandon specialisation to slumber with the specialist, this time without recall.

I do not say that each of us, or anybody, is entitled to wake up. This sum of the possibles seen as a synthesis may exist only in my imagination. I feel quite free to fail. I am uneasy at the thought of taking a failure for a success. Above all I do not yet see the need for limiting the potentialities before me by imposing a specialised piece of work upon myself. What I have in mind is a choice which faces each one of us at each moment. At this very minute I have the choice between obedience to the theory I have undertaken to expound to you and a response to some whim or other that might seize me. I get out of this with some difficulty by telling myself that what I am saying coincides with the direction of the whim; I do not give in to the wish to yield to it but I recognise the greater value of the whim, the opposite of specialisation. Specialisation is the condition of efficiency, and the search for efficiency is characteristic of anyone who feels what he lacks. In this there is an admission of impotence, a humble submission to necessity.

True enough, there is a regrettable weakness in wanting such and such a result and not taking the steps that would bring it about. But there is a strength in not wanting this result and refusing to take the road that leads to it. At this intersection, sanctity is just as much of a possible choice as eroticism. Sanctity is at first on the side of caprice as far as specialised effort goes. The saint is not after efficiency. He is prompted by desire and desire alone and in this resembles the erotic man. The point is whether desire corresponds, better than the specialisation of a project, better than the specialisation that ensures a project's efficiency, with the essence of philosophy, if philosophy is first of all, as I contend it is, the sum of the possibles seen as an operation of synthesis. To put it another way: can that operation be thought of through the simple process of calculation ending in specialisation? Or again, can the sum of the possibles be thought of through the predominance of interest over whim, the other name for desire?

Before going any further I shall try now to make the essential point about eroticism in spite of the difficulty of talking about it.

In the very first place eroticism differs from animal sexuality in that human sexuality is limited by taboos and the domain of eroticism is that of the transgression of these taboos. Desire in eroticism is the desire that triumphs over the taboo. It presupposes man in conflict with himself. The taboos against human sexuality really have specialised forms; for example they affect incest or menstruation, but they can also be thought of in a general way, as for example a way which certainly did not exist in the earliest times (during the transition from the animal to the human), a way even now called into question – nakedness. In fact the taboo on nakedness is today simultaneously very strong and in question. Everybody realises the absurd relativity, the gratuitousness of the taboo on nakedness, the fact that it has been conditioned by historical events; everybody realises also that the taboo on nakedness and the transgression of that taboo make up the general stuff of eroticism, I mean sexuality turned into eroticism (the sexuality peculiar to man, the sexuality of a creature with the gift of tongues). With so-called neurotic complications and with vice of one sort or another, this notion is always significant. Vice can be thought of as the art of giving oneself the feeling of transgression in a more or less maniac way.

Perhaps I should remind you of the curious origin of the theory of taboo and transgression. We find it in the oral teaching of Marcel Mauss whose work is certainly the least questioned contribution to the French school of sociology, but it was followed up by nothing in print. Mauss had a certain distaste for formulating his ideas and giving them a definitive and printable shape. I can even quite believe that the most remarkable results must have been an embarrassment to

him. The basis of the transgression theory does indeed appear in his written work, but only in the form of a brief indication; it is not dwelt upon. Thus in the *Essai sur le sacrifice* he says in a couple of sentences that the Greeks regarded the sacrifice of the Bouphonia as the crime of the sacrificer. He does not generalise. I myself did not follow his oral teaching, but as far as transgression is concerned Marcel Mauss' doctrine is set forth in a little book by one of his pupils, *L'Homme et le sacré*, by Roger Caillois. As luck would have it Roger Caillois, far from being a mere compiler, was himself capable not only of setting out the facts in a compelling fashion but of giving his arguments the strength of active and personal thinking. Caillois' theories may be summed up as follows. For the peoples with whom ethnography is concerned man's time is divided into profane time and sacred time, profane time being ordinary time, the time of work and of respect for the taboos, and sacred time being that of celebrations, that is in essence the time of transgressing the taboos. As far as eroticism goes, celebrations are often a time of sexual licence. As far as religion goes, it is particularly the time for sacrifice, for the transgression of the taboo on murder.

I have given a formal exposition of this doctrine with my personal elaborations in a work dealing with the Lascaux cave paintings, paintings made by the first men, that is, when art was born, when man had really made the step from animal to human.[2] I felt impelled to connect the taboo with work. Work certainly existed before the beginnings of art. We have traces of work in the shape of stone tools preserved in the earth whose relative dates we can ascertain. I decided that work must have implied from the beginning the existence of a world of work from which sexual life and murder and death in general were excluded. Sexual life on the one hand, murder, death and war on the other are grave if not overwhelming disturbances where work is concerned. I cannot see that there is any doubt that such moments must have been radically banished from working time, when men must soon have been co-operating with each other. When it was a question of work the creation and suppression of life must have been put aside, for work itself, in comparison with moments of intense emotion where life and death were at stake and asserting themselves, was a neutral time, a sort of annulment.

The point I am making must I think by now be plain enough. I do not say that non-specialised philosophy is possible. But philosophy in so far as it is a specialised undertaking is work. That is to say that it excludes without even deigning to notice them the moments of intense emotion I referred to earlier. Hence it is not that sum of the possibles seen as a synthesising operation that I take to be of cardinal value. It is not the sum of the possibles, the sum of possible experiences, but only the sum of certain well-defined experiences aimed at knowledge. It is only the sum of knowledge. With a clear conscience, even with a feeling of getting rid of a foreign body, getting rid of some muck, or at least of a source of error, it leaves out the intense emotion bound up with birth, with the creation of life as with death. I am not the first to feel surprised at this disappointing consequence of philosophy, the expression of average humanity become foreign to extreme humanity, that is to the convulsions of sex and death. It even seems to me as if a reaction against this cold and rigid aspect of philosophy is characteristic of modern philosophy as a whole from, say, leaving out Kierkegaard, Nietzsche to Heidegger. Naturally, or so it seems to me, philosophy is in a parlous condition. It has no common ground with a certain extravagant bohemianism of thought which I may well incarnate for some of you. In this it is fully justified. Philosophy is nothing if it is not an effort and hence a disciplined effort, but when it brings in concerted effort and discipline, does not philosophy also fail in its deepest purpose, at least if it is as I have said, 'the sum of the possibles seen as a synthesising operation'? The final point I want to make is that philosophy finds itself in an impasse; without discipline it could accomplish nothing and yet in that it cannot embrace the extremes of its subject, the extremes of the possible as I have called them, the outermost reaches of human life, it is doomed to failure. If it is to be fundamental even a philosophy of death must turn away from its subject. But this is not to say

that philosophy is still possible if it becomes absorbed in it, losing itself in the final vertigo, or only if at the summit philosophy denies philosophy and sneers at philosophy. Supposing indeed that philosophy really sneered at philosophy; that would entail at once discipline and the abandonment of discipline; at such a moment the sum of the possibles is at stake in its entirety, and the sum is a synthesis, not merely an addition, since it ends in that synthetic view where human effort shows its impotence and relaxes in the feeling of its impotence with no regrets. Without discipline this point could not have been reached, but discipline itself can never go the whole road. This is the truth of experience. All the time the mind, the brain of man is reduced to the state of a container overflowing with, burst by its contents – like a suitcase into which objects keep being put which stops being a suitcase in the end, since it ceases to enclose the objects entrusted to it. And above all, extreme states bring an element that cannot be subjected to calm reflection into the sum of the possibles.

I will try to give an accurate description of this overflowing that we may experience.

We are faced with the necessity of making a choice. First we must make a quantitative choice. If we see them as homogeneous the possibles are too numerous. For example, given the limited span of life, we must forgo reading such and such a book in which we might perhaps have found fundamental principles and the answer to the question we are asking ourselves. Then we must tell ourselves that we cannot reach the possibles described in that book.

If the experience of extreme states of being is in question, this time the choice is a qualitative one. For such an experience dislocates us and excludes calm reflection, its essence being to put us 'beside ourselves'. It is difficult to imagine the life of a philosopher continually or at least fairly often beside himself. We come back to the essential human experience dividing time into working time and sacred time. The fact of remaining open to possibilities bordering on madness (which is what happens with any possibility concerned with eroticism, with the threat, or more often the presence, of death, or with sanctity) keeps the work of reflection continually subordinate to something else, and just here reflection comes to an end.

In practice we do not reach an absolute impasse, but what is the heart of the matter? More often than not we forget that philosophy is as competitive as any game. The idea is to get as far on as one can. Humiliatingly enough we are in the position of a man trying to set up a record. The palm may be awarded to developments in various directions according to various points of view. From the point of view of professorial philosophy, the palms obviously go to the man who works and holds aloof from the possibilities offered by transgression. I am deeply suspicious, I admit, of superiority in the opposite direction, where the winner would be the refuser, the ingenuous mouthpiece of laziness and pretension. In agreeing to compete I have personally felt it necessary to accept the difficulties of both paths, the path of transgression as well as the path of work. The limit occurs when it is plainly impossible to respond satisfactorily in both directions at the same time. It is no good persisting. I think the only answer to the question I have put is a feeling of oppression and impotence. We are obviously faced with the impossible. It is not necessary to be resigned but we must realise that the absence of resignation delivers us from nothing. One temptation I must admit to feeling, however. At least with transgression, coinciding as it does with laziness, I can see the advantage of apparent inferiority. But even that is a lie, I cannot deny it; the competition is open and I have entered my name. The fact that my participation is for me inevitably bound up with disputing the principles of the superiority in question has nothing to do with it. One must still advance as far as possible and my indifference is beside the point. Even if I refuse to be involved my refusal is not entire and that is enough. I am committed just the same. Today in any case here I am speaking to you, and that means that solitude is not enough for me.

Let us now push this enquiry to its logical conclusion and try to show the significance of Christianity in relation to the questions I have put forward. Not that I think that I ought to discuss

specifically Christian sanctity when I refer to sanctity. But whatever my intentions are there is no practical difference in the minds of my hearers between sanctity and Christian sanctity, and I have not brought up this point in order to balk the issue. To return to the ideas I was trying to put over just now, I must emphasise the fact that in the Christian system what I call transgression is called sin. Sin is a fault, it is that which ought not to have happened. Take first the death on the Cross: it is a sacrifice, a sacrifice whose victim is God himself. But although the sacrifice redeems us, although the Church sings its paradoxical *Felix Culpa!* – happy error – to the underlying fault, that which redeems us is also that which ought not to have taken place. For Christianity the taboo is absolute and transgression of any kind is condemned out of hand. Yet the condemnation is relaxed because of the very fault most to be condemned, the worst transgression imaginable. The transition from eroticism to sanctity makes very good sense. It is the transition from that which is damned and rejected to that which is fortunate and blessed. On the one hand eroticism is the solitary fault, the thing which saves us only by separating us from everybody else, the thing that saves us only in the euphoria of an illusion, since when all is said and done that which in eroticism bears us to pinnacles of intensity also lays the curse of solitude upon us at the same time. On the other hand sanctity delivers us from solitude but on the condition that we accept the paradox of the happy error, the Felix Culpa! whose very extravagance redeems us. Under such circumstances we can only return to our fellow men by evading the issue. This evasion is doubtless worthy of the name 'renunciation' since in Christianity we cannot simultaneously perform a transgression and enjoy its fruits – only others can enjoy them in damnation and solitude. Harmony with his fellows is not recovered by the Christian unless he forgoes the enjoyment of the means of his redemption, of that which is still never anything but transgression and the violation of the taboos upon which civilisation is founded.

If we follow the path marked out by Christianity, it is true, we can not only escape from solitude but also achieve a kind of equilibrium which avoids the primary disequilibrium of my starting point, preventing us from reconciling discipline and work with the experience of the ultimate. Christian sanctity at any rate opens up the possibility of pushing as far as it will go the experience of that final convulsion ultimately leading to death. Sanctity and the transgression of the taboo concerning death are not to be completely identified. War particularly is the transgression of this taboo. But sanctity is none the less placed on a level with death; in this, sanctity resembles the heroism of the warrior lived out by the saint as if he were dying. What a bewildering twist of direction, though! He lives as though he were dying, but in order to achieve eternal life! Sanctity is always a project. Perhaps not in essence. St. Theresa used to say that even if Hell were to swallow her up she could not but persevere. Anyway, the intention to gain eternal life is connected with sanctity as if with its opposite. Just as if in sanctity only a compromise allowed the saint to make common ground with the mob, with the rest of humanity. With the mob and with philosophy, which comes to the same thing – common ideas, in fact.

The oddest thing is that agreement has been reached between deliberate transgression and the other kinds on the understanding that it shall be a tacit one. This agreement occurs in all forms of archaic religions. Christianity invented the only path of transgression that still permitted discussion. Here let us recognise simply that discussion freed from Christian principles tends to deny anything that looks like transgression and to deny at the same time anything that looks like a taboo. On the sexual level, take the aberration of nudism, which is a denial of the sexual taboo, a denial of the transgression which the taboo necessarily engenders. If you like, discussion is the denial of that which distinguishes the human as opposed to the animal.

As far as I am concerned – it seems to me – as I have been speaking – that I have paid a kind of homage – a rather clumsy one – to silence. A homage to eroticism, too – perhaps. But at this point I should like to counsel my hearers the most extreme caution. I am really speaking a dead

language. This language, I believe, is the language of philosophy. I will go so far as to say that in my opinion philosophy is also the death of language. It is also a sacrifice. The operation I spoke of that synthesises all the possibles is the suppression of every contribution of language which substitutes a neutral and indifferent atmosphere for the experience of springing life. I have cautioned you about language. I must therefore caution you at the same time against my own words. Not that I want to end upon a note of farce, but I have been trying to talk a language that equals zero, a language equivalent to nothing at all, a language that returns to silence. I am not talking about nothingness, which sometimes looks to me like a pretext for adding a specialised chapter onto speech; I am talking about the suppression of whatever language may add to the world. I realise that this suppression cannot be rigorously applied. Anyway the point is not to bring in another sort of duty. But I owe it to myself to put you on guard against an unfortunate use of what I have said. From this point anything that does not take us out of the world (in the sense that through the Church or against the Church a sort of sanctity takes men out of the world) would betray my purpose. I said that discipline, committing us to the ways of work as it does, moves us away from the experience of extremes. Agreed, at least in a general sense, but this experience has its own discipline. At any rate this discipline is primarily contrary to any form of verbal apology of eroticism. Eroticism is silence, I have said; it is solitude. But not for people whose very presence in the world is a pure denial of silence, a chattering, a neglect of potential solitude.

Translated by Mary Dalwood

Notes

1 Lecture given to the Collège Philosophique, Spring 1955.

2 *Lascaux ou la naissance de l'art* ('Les grands siècles de la peinture'), Geneva, Skira, 1955. I say 'the first men', but only in so far as the men of Lascaux cannot have been so very different from the first men. The Lascaux cave paintings are obviously later than the date that can be assigned accurately enough to the 'birth of art'.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Georges Bataille in English

The Story of the Eye by Lord Auch (1928), trans. J. Neugroschal, London: Penguin, 1982.
Inner Experience (1943), trans. L.A. Boldt, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988.
Guilty (1944), trans. B. Boone, Venice: Lapis Press, 1988.
On Nietzsche (1945), trans. B. Boone, London: Continuum, 2004.
The Accursed Share, Vol. 1: Consumption (1949), trans. R. Hurley, New York: Zone Books, 1988.
The Accursed Share, Vol. 2: The History of Eroticism; Vol. 3: Sovereignty, trans. R. Hurley, New York: Zone Books, 1991.
L'Abbe C. (1950), trans. P.A. Facey, London: Marion Boyars, 2001.
Erotism: Death and Sensuality (1957), trans. M. Dalwood, London: Marion Boyars, 1987.
Literature and Evil (1957), trans. A. Hamilton, London: Marion Boyars, 1986.
The Tears of Eros (1961), trans. P. Connor, San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1989.
Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939, ed. A. Stoekl, trans. A. Stoekl, C.R. Lovitt, and D.M. Leslie, Jr, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.
Theory of Religion, trans. R. Hurley, New York: Zone Books, 1989.
Divine Filth: Lost Writings, trans. M. Spitzer, London: Creation Books, 2004.
The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge, ed. S. Kendall, trans. M. Kendall and S. Kendall, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.

The Cradle of Humanity: Prehistoric Art and Culture, ed. S. Kendall, trans. M. Kendall and S. Kendall, New York: Zone Books, 2005.
Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism, trans. M. Richardson, London: Verso, 2006.
Correspondence: Georges Bataille, Michel Leiris, trans. L. Heron, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
The Bataille Reader, eds F. Botting and S. Wilson, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.
Essential Writings, ed. M. Richardson, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1998.

Further reading

For introductions to Bataille's work, see Champagne (1998), Hegarty (2000), Noys (2000), and Richardson (1994). Collections displaying a range of perspectives on Bataille are available from Boldt-Irons (1995), Gill (1994), Stoekl (1990), and Winnubst (2006). Studies of his aesthetics, broadly defined, are provided by Hollier (1989) and Roche (2006), with Guerlac (1996, 2007) and Noland (2004) focusing on primitive art, and Ades and Baker (2006) and Phillips and Shaoling (2006) examining his contribution to surrealism.

The place of ethics and transgression in Bataille is examined by Beng and Gan (2005), Connor (2003), Hussey (2006), and Shaviro (1990), with Dellamora (2001), Richman (1982), and Stoekl (2007) assessing the roles which expenditure and exchange play in his thought. Sacrifice and poetry are considered by Arnould (1996) and Ffrench (2006), while Irwin (2002) and Land (1992) explore mysticism and religion. On language and experience, see Hattingh (1995) and Mayné (1993), and for studies of the relation between Bataille, philosophy, and poststructuralism, see Gemerchak (2003), Guerlac (2000), Jay (1995), Kaufman (2001), Pefanis (1991), and Stoekl (1985).

D. Ades and S. Baker (eds), *Undercover Surrealism: Georges Bataille and Documents*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press; London: Hayward Gallery, 2006.
E. Arnould, 'The impossible sacrifice of poetry: Bataille and the Nancian critique of sacrifice', *Diacritics*, 1996, vol. 26, pp. 86–96.
C. Beng and P. Gan, 'Georges Bataille: mysticism, negativity, and transgression', *Philosophia*, 2005, vol. 34, pp. 200–14.
L.A. Boldt-Irons (ed.), *On Bataille: Critical Essays*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.
R.A. Champagne, *Georges Bataille*, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998.
P.T. Connor, *Georges Bataille and the Mysticism of Sin*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
R. Dellamora, 'Bataille/Wilde: an economic and aesthetic genealogy of the gift', *Angelaki*, 2001, vol. 6, pp. 91–99.
P. Ffrench, '*Donner à voir*: sacrifice and poetry in the work of Georges Bataille', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 2006, vol. 42, pp. 126–38.
C.M. Gemerchak, *The Sunday of the Negative: Reading Bataille, Reading Hegel*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003.
C.B. Gill (ed.), *Bataille: Writing the Sacred*, London: Routledge, 1994.
S. Guerlac, 'Bataille in theory: afterimages (Lascaux)', *Diacritics*, 1996, vol. 26, pp. 6–17.
———, *Literary Polemics: Bataille, Sartre, Valéry, Breton*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
———, 'The useless image: Bataille, Bergson, Magritte', *Representations*, 2007, vol. 97, pp. 28–56.
H. Hattingh, 'Descent into dirt: a reading of Georges Bataille', *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 1995, vol. 14, pp. 150–58.
P. Hegarty, *Georges Bataille: Core Critical Theorist*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 2000.
D. Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille*, trans. B. Wing, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989.
A. Hussey (ed.), *The Beast at Heaven's Gate: Georges Bataille and the Art of Transgression*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006.
A. Irwin, *Saints of the Impossible: Bataille, Weil, and the Politics of the Sacred*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
M. Jay, 'The limits of limit experience: Bataille and Foucault', *Constellations*, 1995, vol. 2, pp. 155–74.
E. Kaufman, *The Delirium of Praise: Bataille, Blanchot, Deleuze, Foucault, Klossowski*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
N. Land, *The Thirst for Annihilation: Georges Bataille and Virulent Nihilism: An Essay in Atheistic Religion*, London: Routledge, 1992.
G. Mayné, *Eroticism in Georges Bataille and Henry Miller*, Birmingham, Alabama: Summa Publications, 1993.

C. Noland, 'Bataille looking', *Modernism/Modernity*, 2004, vol. 11, pp. 125–60.
B. Noys, *Georges Bataille: A Critical Introduction*, London: Pluto Press, 2000.
J. Pefanis, *Heterology and the Postmodern: Bataille, Baudrillard, and Lyotard*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.
J. Phillips and M. Shaoling, 'Undercover surrealism: Picasso, Miro, Masson and the vision of Georges Bataille', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 2006, vol. 23, pp. 253–62.
M. Richardson, *Georges Bataille*, London: Routledge, 1994.
M.H. Richman, *Reading Georges Bataille: Beyond the Gift*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.
G. Roche, 'Black sun: Bataille on Sade', *Janus Head*, 2006, vol. 9, pp. 157–80.
S. Shaviro, *Passion and Excess: Blanchot, Bataille, and Literary Theory*, Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1990.
A. Stoekl, *Politics, Writing, Mutilation: The Case of Bataille, Blanchot, Roussel, Leiris, and Ponge*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.
——— (ed.), *On Bataille*
Yale French Studies, vol. 78), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
———, *Bataille's Peak: Energy, Religion, and Postsustainability*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
S. Winnubst (ed.), *Reading Bataille Now*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

Chapter 20

JACQUES LACAN

INTRODUCTION

Freud's work was brought to a wider audience and subject to radical interpretation through the seminars of Jacques Lacan (1901–81), France's most controversial psychoanalyst. Lacan never held an academic post and, up until 1966, had only published one book – his doctoral thesis of 1932 – but achieved prominence through the weekly public seminars he began in Paris in 1953. Reluctantly, he published a selection of seminar transcripts in 1966, titled *Écrits*, and five thousand copies were sold within a fortnight. His popularity, however, cannot be divorced from his notoriety. The flouting of conventions established by the Société Psychoanalytique de Paris, his staunch opposition to orthodox ego psychology, and the frequent opacity of his prose were all causes of friction between Lacan and other members of the psychoanalytic community.

Lacan 'returns to Freud' in order to revitalize his key concepts, including the unconscious. Recognition of the subversive and revolutionary nature of Freud's ideas, Lacan asserts, has been inhibited by American ego psychology's emphasis on the self as a unified and homogeneous whole. Lacan reinvigorates Freud to present the self as a necessarily divided entity: an opening onto or an intertwinement with that which is other than itself. Two major influences on Lacan are Hegel and structuralism. The anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, in his *Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949), showed how Saussure's structural theory of relations applied not just to language but also to broader patterns of social behaviour and organization. This had the effect of making structuralism a very attractive theoretical position across the humanities. What appeared to conventional, empirical methods of analysis as an external form masking internal, unexplained organization, e.g. sexual taboos and the unconscious, could be represented by structuralism as a series of differences and relationships which held explanatory potential for an individual's or community's entire behaviour.

Hegel's philosophy was also prevalent in post-war France, following the seminars given in Paris during the 1930s by the Russian philosopher Alexandre Kojève on the *Philosophy of Spirit*. His interpretation emphasized the master–slave analogy (or lordship–bondage in the Miller translation) used by Hegel to illustrate the dependence relations which exist between consciousness (master) and its object (slave) in the dialectic. The dialectical relationship which Hegel draws between consciousness and its object means that, as consciousness works towards the *telos* of Absolute Spirit, it is perpetually defining itself against its object. However, a moment of otherness is created by perception, he argues, when it realizes that the object is other than consciousness has judged it to be, giving self-consciousness the structure of Desire: desire for an otherness which is opposite to it but which, given the dynamic nature of the dialectic, necessarily eludes it. 'Self-consciousness', Hegel writes, 'is Desire' since it is 'certain of itself only by superseding this other

that presents itself to self-consciousness as an independent life', but the very act of supersession only generates a new otherness.[1]

Desire is a vital category for Lacan. It plays an ontological role, signifying the necessarily split, transitive order of the subject, as opposed to a state of need which can be readily satisfied. His synthesis of structuralism and Hegelian dialectic creates a psychoanalysis which theorizes subjectivity as an event – a dynamic or a series of transformations – which takes place within a framework of differences, and which is motivated by an insatiable appetite for otherness. A good demonstration of this can be found in 'The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason since Freud', the essay representing Lacan in this volume. 'Agency of the letter' refers to the role which signification, the relation between signifier and signified from Saussurean linguistics, plays in articulating the unconscious. A prominent concern of the chapter is how a material form, the letter, might interact with and 'speak of' an immaterial form, the unconscious. It is also one of the central themes of Hegel's aesthetics, addressed by Hegel through his formulation of art as a representation which takes shape opposite consciousness in such a way that consciousness recognizes it as being both of itself and other than itself. Hegel's ideas are not to the fore in the chapter though. Instead, Lacan's principal interlocutors are Freud, Saussure, and Descartes; the text is in actual fact based on a lecture Lacan gave in the Amphithéâtre Descartes of the Sorbonne on 9 May 1957.

It is Descartes's philosophy, condensed in the *cogito* – 'I think, therefore, I am' – which argues for the foundational, indubitable status of inner, mental life over and above the uncertainties of the outer, physical world, thereby instituting a mental–physical dualism. While it may appear that Descartes can establish the existence of a 'transcendental subject' in terms of thought alone, Lacan's study finds that the process of linguistic signification demands a different understanding of the relation between the human subject and thought. 'Is the place that I occupy as the subject of a signifier,' Lacan asks, 'concentric or excentric, in relation to the place I occupy as subject of the signified?' The question is judged by Lacan to be *the* question. Can we picture the 'I' as the subject of a signifier sharing the centre of a circle with 'I' as subject of the signified? In other words, do signifiers of the subject and signified subjects coincide? The answer is 'no', due to the self's 'radical excentricity' to itself. Freud's discovery, Lacan recalls, is that the self is never present to itself. Whenever I try and catch myself, I only ever observe something else, 'some perception or other', as Hume put it two centuries earlier.[2] What is essential to understanding Lacan's theory though is the nature and source of this otherness: language and the conventions of signification. 'What the psychoanalytic experience discovers in the unconscious,' he argues, 'is the whole structure of language'; this understanding, he adds, was missing from Freud. From Saussure comes the claim that language signifies not because it refers to a thing, to an object we can hold directly, but because each word moves us on towards other words. By placing Saussure's 'movement' claim alongside Freud's concepts of condensation (*Verdichtung*) and displacement (*Verschiebung*), metaphor and metonymy emerge as the linguistic forms whose movements – the superimposition of signifiers and the 'veering off' of signifiers respectively – constitute the mechanism of a symptom, in the psychoanalytic sense.

Metaphor and metonymy, Lacan asserts, exemplify the Hegelian-structuralist thesis that meaning is not the stable relationship between a signifier and a signified but the condition of play whereby one signifier always summons another. Metaphor is the linguistic device which describes one thing in terms of another, e.g. 'love is a battlefield', 'time is a river', and corresponds to the image of pouring one content into the mould of another which Freud used to define the condensation of ideas. The process of displacement, where one idea leads to another, Lacan suggests, can be likened to metonymy, whereby the name of part of a thing is substituted for the

name of the whole, or vice versa, e.g. 'crown' for 'monarch' (part for whole) or the name of a country given as the name of its football team (whole for part). It is the continual metaphoric and metonymic transformation from one idea to the next, without the possibility of a resting place or a 'home' concept, which prompts Lacan to situate the unconscious as a linguistic faculty of desire. The emphasis on 'being as transformation' goes some way towards explaining the density of Lacan's prose. Writing, in contrast to the 'vitality' – the flow, interruptions, and digressions – of the spoken seminar, he maintains, introduces 'the kind of tightening up that I like in order to leave the reader no other way out than the way in, which I prefer to be difficult'. Difficulty is cultivated because the reader is compelled to endure the action of constraint which, it is claimed, represents the passage to understanding and new interpretation. 'Passage' can be taken in its spatial, architectural sense here, especially given the 'corridor' metaphor ('no other way out than the way in') implicit in the quotation. We might picture new meaning sparking from the surface-to-surface friction created as we edge our way along the walls of a confined space. The sexual nature of this imagery is considered by Luce Irigaray in *This Sex Which Is Not One*.[3]

Notes

1 G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 108.
2 D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978, p. 252.
3 L. Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. C. Porter with C. Burke, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985, pp. 24–26.

■ ■ ■

THE AGENCY OF THE LETTER IN THE UNCONSCIOUS OR REASON SINCE FREUD

JACQUES LACAN

'Of Children in Swaddling Clothes
O cities of the sea, I behold in you your citizens, women
as well as men tightly bound with stout bonds around
their arms and legs by folk who will not understand
your language; and you will only be able to give
vent to your griefs and sense of loss of liberty
by making tearful complaints, and sighs, and
lamentations one to another; for those who
bind you will not understand your
language nor will you understand them.'

Leonardo Da Vinci[1]

Although the nature of this contribution was determined by the theme of the third volume of *La Psychanalyse*,[2] I owe to what will be found there to insert it at a point somewhere between writing (*l'écrit*) and speech – it will be half-way between the two.

Writing is distinguished by a prevalence of the *text* in the sense that this factor of discourse will assume in this essay a factor that makes possible the kind of tightening up that I like in order

to leave the reader no other way out than the way in, which I prefer to be difficult. In that sense, then, this will not be writing.

Because I always try to provide my seminars each time with some thing new, I have refrained so far from giving such a text, with one exception, which is not particularly outstanding in the context of the series, and which I refer to at all only for the general level of its argument.

For the urgency that I now take as a pretext for leaving aside such an aim only masks the difficulty that, in trying to maintain it at the level at which I ought to present my teaching here, I might push it too far from speech, whose very different techniques are essential to the formative effect I seek.

That is why I have taken the expedient offered me by the invitation to lecture to the philosophy group of the Fédération des étudiants ès lettres[3] to produce an adaptation suitable to what I have to say: its necessary generality matches the exceptional character of the audience, but its sole object encounters the collusion of their common training, a literary one, to which my title pays homage.

Indeed, how could we forget that to the end of his days Freud constantly maintained that such a training was the prime requisite in the formation of analysts, and that he designated the eternal *universitas litterarum* as the ideal place for its institution.[4]

Thus my recourse (in rewriting) to the movement of the (spoken) discourse, restored to its vitality, by showing whom I meant it for, marks even more clearly those for whom it is not intended.

I mean that it is not intended for those who, for any reason whatever, in psychoanalysis, allow their discipline to avail itself of some false identity – a fault of habit, but its effect on the mind is such that the true identity may appear as simply one alibi among others, a sort of refined reduplication whose implications will not be lost on the most subtle minds. So one observes with a certain curiosity the beginnings of a new direction concerning symbolization and language in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, with a great many sticky fingers leafing through the pages of Sapir and Jespersen. These exercises are still somewhat unpractised, but it is above all the tone that is lacking. A certain 'seriousness' as one enters the domain of veracity cannot fail to raise a smile.

And how could a psychoanalyst of today not realize that speech is the key to that truth, when his whole experience must find in speech alone its instrument, its context, its material, and even the background noise of its uncertainties.

I The meaning of the letter

As my title suggests, beyond this 'speech', what the psychoanalytic experience discovers in the unconscious is the whole structure of language. Thus from the outset I have alerted informed minds to the extent to which the notion that the unconscious is merely the seat of the instincts will have to be rethought.

But how are we to take this 'letter' here? Quite simply, literally.[5]

By 'letter' I designate that material support that concrete discourse borrows from language.

This simple definition assumes that language is not to be confused with the various psychical and somatic functions that serve it in the speaking subject – primarily because language and its structure exist prior to the moment at which each subject at a certain point in his mental development makes his entry into it.

Let us note, then, that aphasias, although caused by purely anatomical lesions in the cerebral apparatus that supplies the mental centre for these functions, prove, on the whole, to distribute their deficits between the two sides of the signifying effect of what we call here 'the letter' in the creation of signification.[6] A point that will be clarified later.

Thus the subject, too, if he can appear to be the slave of language is all the more so of a discourse in the universal movement in which his place is already inscribed at birth, if only by virtue of his proper name.

Reference to the experience of the community, or to the substance of this discourse, settles nothing. For this experience assumes its essential dimension in the tradition that this discourse itself establishes. This tradition, long before the drama of history is inscribed in it, lays down the elementary structures of culture. And these very structures reveal an ordering of possible exchanges which, even if unconscious, is inconceivable outside the permutations authorized by language.

With the result that the ethnographic duality of nature and culture is giving way to a ternary conception of the human condition – nature, society, and culture – the last term of which could well be reduced to language, or that which essentially distinguishes human society from natural societies.

But I shall not make of this distinction either a point or a point of departure, leaving to its own obscurity the question of the original relations between the signifier and labour. I shall be content, for my little jab at the general function of *praxis* in the genesis of history, to point out that the very society that wished to restore, along with the privileges of the producer, the causal hierarchy of the relations between production and the ideological superstructure to their full political rights, has none the less failed to give birth to an esperanto in which the relations of language to socialist realities would have rendered any literary formalism radically impossible.[7]

For my part, I shall trust only those assumptions that have already proven their value by virtue of the fact that language through them has attained the status of an object of scientific investigation.

For it is by virtue of this fact that linguistics[8] is seen to occupy the key position in this domain, and the reclassification of the sciences and a regrouping of them around it signals, as is usually the case, a revolution in knowledge; only the necessities of communication made me inscribe it at the head of this volume under the title 'the sciences of man' – despite the confusion that is thereby covered over.[9]

To pinpoint the emergence of linguistic science we may say that, as in the case of all sciences in the modern sense, it is contained in the constitutive moment of an algorithm that is its foundation. This algorithm is the following:

$$\frac{S}{s}$$

which is read as: the signifier over the signified, 'over' corresponding to the bar separating the two stages.

This sign should be attributed to Ferdinand de Saussure although it is not found in exactly this form in any of the numerous schemas, which none the less express it, to be found in the printed version of his lectures of the years 1906–7, 1908–9, and 1910–11 which the piety of a group of his disciples caused to be published under the title, *Cours de linguistique générale*, a work of prime importance for the transmission of a teaching worthy of the name, that is, that one can come to terms with only in its own terms.

That is why it is legitimate for us to give him credit for the formulation S/*s* by which, in spite of the differences among schools, the beginning of modern linguistics can be recognized.

The thematics of this science is henceforth suspended, in effect, at the primordial position of the signifier and the signified as being distinct orders separated initially by a barrier resisting signification. And that is what was to make possible an exact study of the connections proper to the signifier, and of the extent of their function in the genesis of the signified.

For this primordial distinction goes well beyond the discussion concerning the arbitrariness of the sign, as it has been elaborated since the earliest reflections of the ancients, and even beyond the impasse which, through the same period, has been encountered in every discussion of the bi-univocal correspondence between the word and the thing, if only in the mere act of naming. All this, of course, is quite contrary to the appearances suggested by the importance often imputed to the role of the index finger pointing to an object in the learning process of the *infans* subject learning his mother tongue, or the use in foreign language teaching of so-called 'concrete' methods.

One cannot go further along this line of thought than to demonstrate that no signification can be sustained other than by reference to another signification:[10] in its extreme form this amounts to the proposition that there is no language (*langue*) in existence for which there is any question of its inability to cover the whole field of the signified, it being an effect of its existence as a language (*langue*) that it necessarily answers all needs. If we try to grasp in language the constitution of the object, we cannot fail to notice that this constitution is to be found only at the level of concept, a very different thing from a simple nominative, and that the *thing*, when reduced to the noun, breaks up into the double, divergent beam of the 'cause' (*causa*) in which it has taken shelter in the French word *chose*, and the nothing (*rien*) to which it has abandoned its Latin dress (*rem*).

These considerations, important as their existence is for the philosopher, turn us away from the locus in which language questions us as to its very nature. And we will fail to pursue the question further as long as we cling to the illusion that the signifier answers to the function of representing the signified, or better, that the signifier has to answer for its existence in the name of any signification whatever.

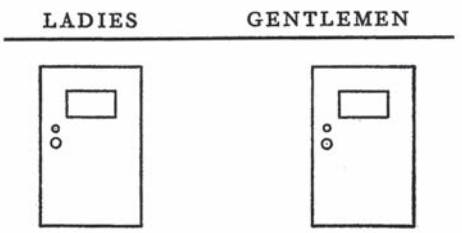
For even reduced to this latter formulation, the heresy is the same – the heresy that leads logical positivism in search of the 'meaning of meaning',[11] as its objective is called in the language of its devotees. As a result, we can observe that even a text highly charged with meaning can be reduced, through this sort of analysis, to insignificant bagatelles, all that survives being mathematical algorithms that are, of course, without any meaning.[12]

To return to our formula S/*s*: if we could infer nothing from it but the notion of the parallelism of its upper and lower terms, each one taken in its globality, it would remain the enigmatic sign of a total mystery. Which of course is not the case.

In order to grasp its function I shall begin by reproducing the classic, yet faulty illustration by which its usage is normally introduced:

One can see how it opens the way to the kind of error referred to above.

In my lecture, I replaced this illustration with another, which has no greater claim to correctness than that it has been transplanted into that incongruous dimension that the psychoanalyst has not yet altogether renounced because of his quite justified feeling that his conformism takes its value entirely from it. Here is the other diagram:



where we see that, without greatly extending the scope of the signifier concerned in the experiment, that is, by doubling a noun through the mere juxtaposition of two terms whose

complementary meanings ought apparently to reinforce each other, a surprise is produced by an unexpected precipitation of an unexpected meaning: the image of twin doors symbolizing, through the solitary confinement offered Western Man for the satisfaction of his natural needs away from home, the imperative that he seems to share with the great majority of primitive communities by which his public life is subjected to the laws of urinary segregation.

It is not only with the idea of silencing the nominalist debate with a low blow that I use this example, but rather to show how in fact the signifier enters the signified, namely, in a form which, not being immaterial, raises the question of its place in reality. For the blinking gaze of a short sighted person might be justified in wondering whether this was indeed the signifier as he peered closely at the little enamel signs that bore it, a signifier whose signified would in this call receive its final honours from the double and solemn procession from the upper nave.

But no contrived example can be as telling as the actual experience of truth. So I am happy to have invented the above, since it awoke in the person whose word I most trust a memory of childhood, which having thus happily come to my attention is best placed here.

A train arrives at a station. A little boy and a little girl, brother and sister, are seated in a compartment face to face next to the window through which the buildings along the station platform can be seen passing as the train pulls to a stop. 'Look', says the brother, 'we're at Ladies!'; 'Idiot!' replies his sister, 'Can't you see we're at Gentlemen'.

Besides the fact that the rails in this story materialize the bar in the Saussurian algorithm (and in a form designed to suggest that its resistance may be other than dialectical), we should add that only someone who didn't have his eyes in front of the holes (it's the appropriate image here) could possibly confuse the place of the signifier and the signified in this story, or not see from what radiating centre the signifier sends forth its light into the shadow of incomplete significations.

For this signifier will now carry a purely animal Dissension, destined for the usual oblivion of natural mists, to the unbridled power of ideological warfare, relentless for families, a torment to the Gods. For these children, Ladies and Gentlemen will be henceforth two countries towards which each of their souls will strive on divergent wings, and between which a truce will be the more impossible since they are actually the same country and neither can compromise on its own superiority without detracting from the glory of the other.

But enough. It is beginning to sound like the history of France. Which it is more human, as it ought to be, to evoke here than that of England, destined to tumble from the Large to the Small End of Dean Swift's egg.

It remains to be conceived what steps, what corridor, the S of the signifier, visible here in the plurals[13] in which it focuses its welcome beyond the window, must take in order to rest its elbows on the ventilators through which, like warm and cold air, indignation and scorn come hissing out below.

One thing is certain: if the algorithm S/*s* with its bar is appropriate, access from one to the other cannot in any case have a signification. For in so far as it is itself only pure function of the signifier, the algorithm can reveal only the structure of a signifier in this transfer.

Now the structure of the signifier is, as it is commonly said of language itself, that it should be articulated.

This means that no matter where one starts to designate their reciprocal encroachments and increasing inclusions, these units are subjected to the double condition of being reducible to ultimate differential elements and of combining them according to the laws of a closed order.

These elements, one of the decisive discoveries of linguistics, are *phonemes*; but we must not expect to find any *phonetic* constancy in the modulatory variability to which this term applies, but rather the synchronic system of differential couplings necessary for the discernment of sounds in a given language. Through this, one sees that an essential element of the spoken word itself was predestined to flow into the mobile characters which, in a jumble of lower-case Didots or

Garamonds,[14] render validly present what we call the 'letter', namely, the essentially localized structure of the signifier.

With the second property of the signifier, that of combining according to the laws of a closed order, is affirmed the necessity of the topological substratum of which the term I ordinarily use, namely, the signifying chain, gives an approximate idea: rings of a necklace that is a ring in another necklace made of rings.

Such are the structural conditions that define grammar as the order of constitutive encroachments of the signifier up to the level of the unit immediately superior to the sentence, and lexicology as the order of constitutive inclusions of the signifier to the level of the verbal locution.

In examining the limits by which these two exercises in the understanding of linguistic usage are determined, it is easy to see that only the correlations between signifier and signifier provide the standard for all research into signification, as is indicated by the notion of 'usage' of a taxeme or semanteme which in fact refers to the context just above that of the units concerned.

But it is not because the undertakings of grammar and lexicology are exhausted within certain limits that we must think that beyond those limits signification reigns supreme: That would be an error.

For the signifier, by its very nature, always anticipates meaning by unfolding its dimension before it. As is seen at the level of the sentence when it is interrupted before the significant term: 'I shall never …', 'All the same it is …', 'And yet there may be …' Such sentences are not without meaning, a meaning all the more oppressive in that it is content to make us wait for it.[15]

But the phenomenon is no different which by the mere recoil of a 'but' brings to the light, comely as the Shulamite, honest as the dew, the negress adorned for the wedding and the poor woman ready for the auctionblock.[16]

From which we can say that it is in the chain of the signifier that the meaning 'insists' but that none of its elements 'consists' in the signification of which it is at the moment capable.

We are forced, then, to accept the notion of an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier – which Ferdinand de Saussure illustrates with an image resembling the wavy lines of the upper and lower Waters in miniatures from manuscripts of *Genesis*; a double flux marked by fine streaks of rain, vertical dotted lines supposedly confining segments of correspondence.

All our experience runs counter to this linearity, which made me speak once, in one of my seminars on psychosis, of something more like 'anchoring points' ('*points de capiton*') as a schema for taking into account the dominance of the letter in the dramatic transformation that dialogue can effect in the subject.[17]

The linearity that Saussure holds to be constitutive of the chain of discourse, in conformity with its emission by a single voice and with its horizontal position in our writing – if this linearity is necessary, in fact, it is not sufficient: It applies to the chain of discourse only in the direction in which it is orientated in time, being taken as a signifying factor in all languages in which 'Peter hits Paul' reverses its time when the terms are inverted.

But one has only to listen to poetry, which Saussure was no doubt in the habit of doing,[18] for a polyphony to be heard, for it to become clear that all discourse is aligned along the several staves of a score.

There is in effect no signifying chain that does not have, as if attached to the punctuation of each of its units, a whole articulation of relevant contexts suspended 'vertically', as it were, from that point.

Let us take our word 'tree' again, this time not as an isolated noun, but at the point of one of these punctuations, and see how it crosses the bar of the Saussurian algorithm. (The anagram of '*arbre*' and '*barre*' should be noted.)

For even broken down into the double spectre of its vowels and consonants, it can still call up with the robot and the plane tree the significations it takes on, in the context of our flora, of strength and majesty. Drawing on all the symbolic contexts suggested in the Hebrew of the

Bible, it erects on a barren hill the shadow of the cross. Then reduces to the capital Y, the sign of dichotomy which, except for the illustration used by heraldry, would owe nothing to the tree however genealogical we may think it. Circulatory tree, tree of life of the cerebellum, tree of Saturn, tree of Diana, crystals formed in a tree struck by lightning, is it your figure that traces our destiny for us in the tortoise-shell cracked by the fire, or your lightning that causes that slow shift in the axis of being to surge up from an unnamable night into the *Ἔνπάντα* of language:

No! says the Tree, it says No! in the shower of sparks
Of its superb head

lines that require the harmonics of the tree just as much as their continuation:

Which the storm treats as universally
As it does a blade of grass.[19]

For this modern verse is ordered according to the same law of the parallelism of the signifier that creates the harmony governing the primitive Slavic epic or the most refined Chinese poetry.

As is seen in the fact that the tree and the blade of grass are chosen from the same mode of the existent in order for the signs of contradiction – saying 'No!' and 'treat as' – to affect them, and also so as to being about, through the categorical contrast of the particularity of 'superb' with the 'universally' that reduces it, in the condensation of the 'head' (*tête*) and the 'storm' (*tempête*), the indiscernible shower of sparks of the eternal instant.

But this whole signifier can only operate, it may be said, if it is present in the subject. It is this objection that I answer by supposing that it has passed over to the level of the signified.

For what is important is not that the subject know anything whatsoever. (If LADIES and GENTLEMEN were written in a language unknown to the little boy and girl, their quarrel would simply be the more exclusively a quarrel over words, but no less ready to take on signification.)

What this structure of the signifying chain discloses is the possibility I have, precisely in so far as I have this language in common with other subjects, that is to say, in so far as it exists as a language, to use it in order to signify *something quite other* than what it says. This function of speech is more worth pointing out than that of 'disguising the thought' (more often than not indefinable) of the subject; it is no less than the function of indicating the place of this subject in the search for the true.

I have only to plant my tree in a locution; climb the tree, even project on to it the cunning illumination a descriptive context gives to a word; raise it (*arborer*) so as not to let myself be imprisoned in some sort of *communiqué* of the facts, however official, and if I know the truth, make it heard, in spite of all *the between-the-lines* censures by the only signifier my acrobatics through the branches of the tree can constitute, provocative to the point of burlesque, or perceptible only to the practised eye, according to whether I wish to be heard by the mob or by the few.

The properly signifying function thus depicted in language has a name. We learned this name in some grammar of our childhood, on the last page, where the shade of Quintilian, relegated to some phantom chapter concerning 'final considerations on style', seemed suddenly to speed up his voice in an attempt to get in all he had to say before the end.

It is among the figures of style, or tropes – from which the verb 'to find' (*trouver*) comes to us – that this name is found. This name is *metonymy*.

I shall refer only to the example given there: 'thirty sails'. For the disquietude I felt over the fact that the word 'ship', concealed in this expression, seemed, by taking on its figurative sense, through the endless repetition of the same old example, only to increase its presence, obscured (*voilait*) not so much those illustrious sails (*voiles*) as the definition they were supposed to illustrate.

The part taken for the whole, we said to ourselves, and if the thing is to be taken seriously, we are left with very little idea of the importance of this fleet, which 'thirty sails' is precisely supposed to give us: for each ship to have just one sail is in fact the least likely possibility.

By which we see that the connexion between ship and sail is nowhere but in the signifier, and that it is in the *word-to-word* connexion that metonymy is based.[20]

I shall designate as metonymy, then, the one side (*versant*) of the effective field constituted by the signifier, so that meaning can emerge there.

The other side is *metaphor*. Let us immediately find an illustration; Quillet's dictionary seemed an appropriate place to find a sample that would not seem to be chosen for my own purposes, and I didn't have to go any further than the well known line of Victor Hugo:

His sheaf was neither miserly nor spiteful …[21]

under which aspect I presented metaphor in my seminar on the psychoses.

It should be said that modern poetry and especially the Surrealist school have taken us a long way in this direction by showing that any conjunction of two signifiers would be equally sufficient to constitute a metaphor, except for the additional requirement of the greatest possible disparity of the images signified, needed for the production of the poetic spark, or in other words for metaphoric creation to take place.

It is true this radical position is based on the experiment known as automatic writing, which would not have been attempted if its *pioneers* had not been reassured by the Freudian discovery. But it remains a confused position because the doctrine behind it is false.

The creative spark of the metaphor does not spring from the presentation of two images, that is, of two signifiers equally actualized. It flashes between two signifiers one of which has taken the place of the other in the signifying chain, the occulted signifier remaining present through its (metonymic) connexion with the rest of the chain.

One word for another: that is the formula for the metaphor and if you are a poet you will produce for your own delight a continuous stream, a dazzling tissue of metaphors. If the result is the sort of intoxication of the dialogue that Jean Tardieu wrote under this title, that is only because he was giving us a demonstration of the radical superfluousness of all signification in a perfectly convincing representation of a bourgeois comedy.

It is obvious that in the line of Hugo cited above, not the slightest spark of light springs from the proposition that the sheaf was neither miserly nor spiteful, for the reason that there is no question of the sheaf's having either the merit or demerit of these attributes, since the attributes, like the sheaf, belong to Booz, who exercises the former in disposing of the latter and without informing the latter of his sentiments in the case.

If, however, his sheaf does refer us to Booz, and this is indeed the case, it is because it has replaced him in the signifying chain at the very place where he was to be exalted by the sweeping away of greed and spite. But now Booz himself has been swept away by the sheaf, and hurled into the outer darkness where greed and spite harbour him in the hollow of their negation.

But once *his* sheaf has thus usurped his place Booz can no longer return there; the slender thread of the little word *his* that binds him to it is only one more obstacle to his return in that it links him to the notion of possession that retains him at the heart of greed and spite. So *his* generosity, affirmed in the passage, is yet reduced to *less than nothing* by the munificence of the sheaf which, coming from nature, knows neither our reserve nor our rejections, and even in its accumulation remains prodigal by our standards.

But if in this profusion the giver has disappeared along with his gift, it is only in order to rise again in what surrounds the figure of speech in which he was annihilated. For it is the figure

of the burgeoning of fecundity, and it is this that announces the surprise that the poem celebrates, namely, the promise that the old man will receive in the sacred context of his accession to paternity.

So, it is between the signifier in the form of the proper name of a man and the signifier that metaphorically abolishes him that the poetic spark is produced, and it is in this case all the more effective in realizing the signification of paternity in that it reproduces the mythical event in terms of which Freud reconstructed the progress, in the unconscious of all men, of the paternal mystery.

Modern metaphor has the same structure. So the line *Love is a pebble laughing in the sunlight* recreates love in a dimension that seems to me most tenable in the face of its imminent lapse into the mirage of narcissistic altruism.

We see, then, that metaphor occurs at the precise point at which sense emerges from nonsense, that is, at that frontier which, as Freud discovered, when crossed the other way produces the word that in French is *the* word *par excellence*, the word that is simply the signifier '*esprit*';[22] it is at this frontier that we realize that man defies his very destiny when he derides the signifier.

But to come back to our subject, what does man find in metonymy if not the power to circumvent the obstacles of social censure? Does not this form, which gives its field to truth in its very oppression, manifest a certain servitude inherent in its presentation?

One may read with profit a book by Leo Strauss, from the land that traditionally offers asylum to those who choose freedom, in which the author reflects on the relation between the art of writing and persecution.[23] By pushing to its limits the sort of connaturality that links this art to that condition, he lets us glimpse a certain something which in this matter imposes its form, in the effect of truth on desire.

But haven't we felt for some time now that, having followed the ways of the letter in search of Freudian truth, we are getting very warm indeed, that it is burning all about us?

Of course, as it is said, the letter killeth while the spirit giveth life. We can't help but agree, having had to pay homage elsewhere to a noble victim of the error of seeking the spirit in the letter; but we should also like to know how the spirit could live without the letter. Even so, the pretentions of the spirit would remain unassailable if the letter had not shown us that it produces all the effects of truth in man without involving the spirit at all.

It is none other than Freud who had this revelation, and he called his discovery the unconscious.

II The letter in the unconscious

In the complete works of Freud, one out of every three pages is devoted to philological references, one out of every two pages to logical inferences, everywhere a dialectical apprehension of experience, the proportion of analysis of language increasing to the extent that the unconscious is directly concerned.

Thus in 'The Interpretation of Dreams' every page deals with what I call the letter of the discourse, in its texture, its usage, its immanence in the matter in question. For it is with this work that the work of Freud begins to open the royal road to the unconscious. And Freud gave us notice of this; his confidence at the time of launching this book in the early days of this century[24] only confirms what he continued to pro-claim to the end: that he had staked the whole of his discovery on this essential expression of his message.

The first sentence of the opening chapter announces what for the sake of the exposition could not be postponed: that the dream is a rebus. And Freud goes on to stipulate what I have said from the start, that it must be understood quite literally. This derives from the agency in the dream of that same literal (or phonematic) structure in which the signifier is articulated and

analysed in discourse. So the unnatural images of the boat on the roof, or the man with a comma for a head, which are specifically mentioned by Freud, are examples of dream-images that are to be taken only for their value as signifiers, that is to say, in so far as they allow us to spell out the 'proverb' presented by the rebus of the dream. The linguistic structure that enables us to read dreams is the very principle of the 'significance of the dream', the *Traumdeutung*.

Freud shows us in every possible way that the value of the image as signifier has nothing whatever to do with its signification, giving as an example Egyptian hieroglyphics in which it would be sheer buffoonery to pretend that in a given text the frequency of a vulture, which is an *aleph*, or of a chick, which is a *vau*, indicating a form of the verb 'to be' or a plural, prove that the text has anything at all to do with these ornithological specimens. Freud finds in this writing certain uses of the signifier that are lost in ours, such as the use of determinatives, where a categorical figure is added to the literal figuration of a verbal term; but this is only to show us that even in this writing, the so-called 'ideogram' is a letter.

But it does not require the current confusion on this last term for there to prevail in the minds of psychoanalysts lacking linguistic training the prejudice in favour of a symbolism deriving from natural analogy, or even of the image as appropriate to the instinct. And to such an extent that, outside the French school, which has been alerted, a distinction must be drawn between reading coffee grounds and reading hieroglyphics, by recalling to its own principles a technique that could not be justified were it not directed towards the unconscious.

It must be said that this is admitted only with difficulty and that the mental vice denounced above enjoys such favour that today's psychoanalyst can be expected to say that he decodes before he will come around to taking the necessary tour with Freud (turn at the statute of Champollion,[25] says the guide) that will make him understand that what he does is decipher; the distinction is that a cryptogram takes on its full dimension only when it is in a lost language.

Taking the tour is simply continuing in the *Traumdeutung*.

Entstellung, translated as 'distortion' or 'transposition', is what Freud shows to be the general precondition for the functioning of the dream, and it is what I designated above, following Saussure, as the sliding of the signified under the signifier, which is always active in discourse (its action, let us note, is unconscious).

But what we call the two 'sides' of the effect of the signifier on the signified are also found here.

Verdichtung, or 'condensation', is the structure of the superimposition of the signifiers, which metaphor takes as its field, and whose name, condensing in itself the word *Dichtung*, shows how the mechanism is connatural with poetry to the point that it envelops the traditional function proper to poetry.

In the case of *Verschiebung*, 'displacement', the German term is closer to the idea of that veering off of signification that we see in metonymy, and which from its first appearance in Freud is represented as the most appropriate means used by the unconscious to foil censorship.

What distinguishes these two mechanisms, which play such a privileged role in the dream-work (*Traumarbeit*), from their homologous function in discourse. Nothing, except a condition imposed upon the signifying material, called *Rücksicht auf Darstellbarkeit*, which must be translated by 'consideration of the means of representation'. (The translation by 'role of the possibility of figurative expression' being too approximative here.) But this condition constitutes a limitation operating *within* the system of writing; this is a long way from dissolving the system into a figurative semiology on a level with phenomena of natural expression. This fact could perhaps shed light on the problems involved in certain modes of pictography which, simply because they have been abandoned in writing as imperfect, are not therefore to be regarded as mere evolutionary stages. Let us say, then, that the dream is like the parlour-game in which one is supposed to get the spectators to guess some well known saying or variant of it solely by dumb-show.

That the dream uses speech makes no difference since for the unconscious it is only one among several elements of the representation. It is precisely the fact that both the game and the dream run up against a lack of taxematic material for the representation of such logical articulations as causality, contradiction, hypothesis, etc., that proves they are a form of writing rather than of mime. The subtle processes that the dream is seen to use to represent these logical articulations, in a much less artificial way than games usually employ, are the object of a special study in Freud in which we see once more confirmed that the dream-work follows the laws of the signifier.

The rest of the dream-elaboration is designated as secondary by Freud, the nature of which indicates its value: they are phantasies or daydreams (*Tagtraum*) to use the term Freud prefers in order to emphasize their function of wish-fulfilment (*Wunscherfüllung*). Given the fact that these phantasies may remain unconscious, their distinctive feature is in this case their signification. Now, concerning these phantasies, Freud tells us that their place in the dream is either to be taken up and used as signifying elements for the statement of the unconscious thoughts (*Traumgedanke*), or to be used in the secondary elaboration just mentioned, that is to say, in a function not to be distinguished from our waking thought (*von unserem wachen Denken nicht zu unterschieden*). No better idea of the effects of this function can be given than by comparing it to areas of colour which, when applied here and there to a stencilplate, can make the stencilled figures, rather forbidding in themselves, more reminiscent of hieroglyphics or of a rebus, look like a figurative painting.

Forgive me if I seem to have to spell out Freud's text; I do so not only to show how much is to be gained by not cutting it about, but also in order to situate the development of psychoanalysis according to its first guide-lines, which were fundamental and never revoked.

Yet from the beginning there was a general *méconnaissance* of the constitutive role of the signifier in the status that Freud from the first assigned to the unconscious and in the most precise formal manner.

There are two reasons for this, of which the least obvious, of course, is that this formalization was not sufficient in itself to bring about a recognition of the agency of the signifier because the *Traumdeutung* appeared long before the formalizations of linguistics for which one could no doubt show that it paved the way by the sheer weight of its truth.

The second reason, which is after all only the reverse side of the first, is that if psychoanalysts were fascinated exclusively by the significations revealed in the unconscious, it is because these significations derived their secret attraction from the dialectic that seemed to be immanent in them.

I have shown in my seminars that it is the need to counteract the continuously accelerating effects of this bias that alone explains the apparent changes of direction or rather changes of tack, which Freud, through his primary concern to preserve for posterity both his discovery and the fundamental revisions it effected in our knowledge, felt it necessary to apply to his doctrine.

For, I repeat, in the situation in which he found himself, having nothing that corresponded to the object of his discovery that was at the same level of scientific development – in this situation, at least he never failed to maintain this object on the level of its ontological dignity.

The rest was the work of the gods and took such a course that analysis today takes its bearings in those imaginary forms that I have just shown to be drawn 'resist-style' (*en reserve*) on the text they mutilate – and the analyst tries to accommodate his direction to them, confusing them, in the interpretation of the dream, with the visionary liberation of the hieroglyphic aviary, and seeking generally the control of the exhaustion of the analysis in a sort of 'scanning'[26] of these forms whenever they appear, in the idea that they are witnesses of the exhaustion of the regressions and of the remodelling of the object relation from which the subject is supposed to derive his 'character-type'.[27]

The technique that is based on such positions can be fertile in its various effects, and under the aegis of therapy, difficult to criticize. But an internal criticism must none the less arise from the flagrant disparity between the mode of operation by which the technique is justified – namely the analytic rule, all the instruments of which, beginning with 'free association', depend on the conception of the unconscious of its inventor – and, on the other hand, the general *méconnaissance*

that reigns regarding this conception of the unconscious. The most ardent adherents of this technique believe themselves to be freed of any need to reconcile the two by the merest pirouette: the analytic rule (they say) must be all the more religiously observed since it is only the result of a lucky accident. In other words, Freud never knew what he was doing.

A return to Freud's text shows on the contrary the absolute coherence between his technique and his discovery, and at the same time this coherence allows us to put all his procedures in their proper place.

That is why any rectification of psychoanalysis must inevitably involve a return to the truth of that discovery, which, taken in its original moment, is impossible to obscure.

For in the analysis of dreams, Freud intends only to give us the laws of the unconscious in their most general extension. One of the reasons why dreams were most propitious for this demonstration is exactly, Freud tells us, that they reveal the same laws whether in the normal person or in the neurotic.

But in either case, the efficacy of the unconscious does not cease in the waking state. The psychoanalytic experience does nothing other than establish that the unconscious leaves none of our actions outside its field. The presence of the unconscious in the psychological order, in other words in the relation-functions of the individual, should, however, be more precisely defined: it is not coextensive with that order, for we know that if unconscious motivation is manifest in conscious psychical effects, as well as in unconscious ones, conversely it is only elementary to recall to mind that a large number of psychical effects that are quite legitimately designated as unconscious, in the sense of excluding the characteristic of consciousness, are nonetheless without any relation whatever to the unconscious in the Freudian sense. So it is only by an abuse of the term that unconscious in that sense is confused with psychical, and that one may thus designate as psychical what is in fact an effect of the unconscious, as on the somatic for instance.

It is a matter, therefore, of defining the topography of this unconscious. I say that it is the very topography defined by the algorithm:

$$\frac{S}{s}$$

What we have been able to develop concerning the effects of the signifier on the signified suggests its transformation into:

$$f(S)\frac{I}{s}$$

We have shown the effects not only of the elements of the horizontal signifying chain, but also of its vertical dependencies in the signified, divided into two fundamental structures called metonymy and metaphor. We can symbolize them by, first:

$$f(S \ldots S')\, S \cong S(-)\, s$$

that is to say, the metonymy structure, indicating that it is the connexion between signifier and signifier that permits the elision in which the signifier installs the lack-of-being in the object relation, using the value of 'reference back' possessed by signification in order to invest it with the desire aimed at the very lack it supports. The sign – placed between ( ) represents here the maintenance of the bar – which, in the original algorithm, marked the irreducibility in which, in the relations between signifier and signified, the resistance of signification is constituted.[28] Secondly,

$$f\frac{S'}{S}\, S \cong S\,(+)\, s$$

the metaphoric structure indicating that it is in the substitution of signifier for signifier that an effect of signification is produced that is creative or poetic, in other words, which is the advent of the signification in question.[29] The sign + between ( ) represents here the crossing of the bar – and the constitutive value of this crossing for the emergence of signification.

This crossing expresses the condition of passage of the signifier into the signified that I pointed out above, although provisionally confusing it with the place of the subject.

It is the function of the subject, thus introduced, that we must now turn to since it lies at the crucial point of our problem.

'I think, therefore I am' (*cogito ergo sum*) is not merely the formula in which is constituted, with the historical high point of reflection on the conditions of science, the link between the transparency of the transcendental subject and his existential affirmation.

Perhaps I am only object and mechanism (and so nothing more than phenomenon), but assuredly in so far as I think so, I am – absolutely. No doubt philosophers have brought important corrections to this formulation, notably that in that which thinks (*cogitans*), I can never constitute myself as anything but object (*cogitatum*). Nonetheless it remains true that by way of this extreme purification of the transcendental subject, my existential link to its project seems irrefutable, at least in its present form, and that: *'cogito ergo sum' ubi cogito*, *ibi sum*, overcomes this objection.

Of course, this limits me to being there in my being only in so far as I think that I am in my thought; just how far I actually think this concerns only myself and if I say it, interests no one.[30]

Yet to elude this problem on the pretext of its philosophical pretensions is simply to admit one's inhibition. For the notion of subject is indispensable even to the operation of a science such as strategy (in the modern sense) whose calculations exclude all 'subjectivism'.

It is also to deny oneself access to what might be called the Freudian universe – in the way that we speak of the Copernican universe. It was in fact the so-called Copernican revolution to which Freud himself compared his discovery, emphasizing that it was once again a question of the place man assigns to himself at the centre of a universe.

Is the place that I occupy as the subject of a signifier concentric or excentric, in relation to the place I occupy as subject of the signified? – that is the question.

It is not a question of knowing whether I speak of myself in a way that conforms to what I am, but rather of knowing whether I am the same as that of which I speak. And it is not at all inappropriate to use the word 'thought' here. For Freud uses the term to designate the elements involved in the unconscious, that is the signifying mechanisms that we now recognize as being there.

It is nonetheless true that the philosophical *cogito* is at the centre of the mirage that renders modern man so sure of being himself even in his uncertainties about himself, and even in the mistrust he has learned to practise against the traps of self-love.

Furthermore, if, turning the weapon of metonymy against the nostalgia that it serves, I refuse to seek any meaning beyond tautology, if in the name of 'war is war' and 'a penny's a penny' I decide to be only what I am, how even here can I elude the obvious fact that I am in that very act?

And it is no less true if I take myself to the other, metaphoric pole of the signifying quest, and if I dedicate myself to becoming what I am, to coming into being, I cannot doubt that even if I lose myself in the process, I am in that process.

Now it is on these very points, where evidence will be subverted by the empirical, that the trick of the Freudian conversion lies.

This signifying game between metonymy and metaphor, up to and including the active edge that splits my desire between a refusal of the signifier and a lack of being, and links my fate to the question of my destiny, this game, in all its inexorable subtlety, is played until the match is called, there where I am not, because I cannot situate myself there.

That is to say, what is needed is more than these words with which, for a brief moment I disconcerted my audience: I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think. Words that render sensible to an ear properly attuned with what elusive ambiguity[31] the ring of meaning flees from our grasp along the verbal thread.

What one ought to say is: I am not wherever I am the plaything of my thought; I think of what I am where I do not think to think.

This two-sided mystery is linked to the fact that the truth can be evoked only in that dimension of alibi in which all 'realism' in creative works takes its virtue from metonymy; it is likewise linked to this other fact that we accede to meaning only through the double twist of metaphor when we have the one and only key: the S and the *s* of the Saussurian algorithm are not on the same level, and man only deludes himself when he believes his true place is at their axis, which is nowhere.

Was nowhere, that is, until Freud discovered it; for if what Freud discovered isn't that, it isn't anything.

The contents of the unconscious with all their disappointing ambiguities give us no reality in the subject more consistent than the immediate; their virtue derives from the truth and in the dimension of being: *Kern unseres Wesen*[32] are Freud's own terms.

The double triggered mechanism of metaphor is the very mechanism by which the symptom, in the analytic sense, is determined. Between the enigmatic signifier of the sexual trauma and the term that is substituted for it in an actual signifying chain there passes the spark that fixes in a symptom the signification inaccessible to the conscious subject in which that symptom may be resolved – a symptom being a metaphor in which flesh or function is taken as a signifying element.

And the enigmas that desire seems to pose for a 'natural philosophy' – its frenzy mocking the abyss of the infinite, the secret collusion with which it envelops the pleasure of knowing and of dominating with *jouissance*, these amount to no other derangement of instinct than that of being caught in the rails – eternally stretching forth towards the *desire for something else* – of metonymy. Hence its 'perverse' fixation at the very suspension-point of the signifying chain where the memory-screen is immobilized and the fascinating image of the fetish is petrified.

There is no other way of conceiving the indestructibility of unconscious desire – in the absence of a need which, when forbidden satisfaction, does not sicken and die, even if it means the destruction of the organism itself. It is in a memory, comparable to what is called by that name in our modern thinking-machines (which are in turn based on an electronic realization of the composition of signification), it is in this sort of memory that is found the chain that *insists* on reproducing itself in the transference, and which is the chain of dead desire.

It is the truth of what this desire has been in his history that the patient cries out through his symptom, as Christ said that the stones themselves would have cried out if the children of Israel had not lent them their voice.

And that is why only psychoanalysis allows us to differentiate within memory the function of recollection. Rooted in the signifier, it resolves the Platonic aporias of reminiscence through the ascendancy of history in man.

One has only to read the 'Three Essays on Sexuality' to observe, in spite of the pseudo-biological glosses with which it is decked out for popular consumption, that Freud there derives all accession to the object from a dialectic of return.

Starting from Hölderlin's *νοστος*, Freud arrives less than twenty years later at Kierkegaard's repetition; that is, in submitting his thought solely to the humble but inflexible consequences of the 'talking cure',[33] he was unable ever to escape the living servitudes that led him from the sovereign principle of the Logos to re-thinking the Empedoclean antinomies of death.

And how else are we to conceive the recourse of a man of science to a *Deus ex machina* than on that 'other scene' he speaks of as the locus of the dream, a *Deus ex machina* only less derisory

for the fact that it is revealed to the spectator that the machine directs the director? How else can we imagine that a scientist of the nineteenth century, unless we realize that he had to bow before the force of evidence that went well beyond his prejudices, valued more highly than all his other works his *Totem and Taboo*, with its obscene, ferocious figure of the primordial father, not to be exhausted in the expiation of Oedipus' blindness, and before which the ethnologists of today bow as before the growth of an authentic myth?

So that imperious proliferation of particular symbolic creations, such as what are celled the sexual theories of the child, which supply the motivation down to the smallest detail of neurotic compulsions, these reply to the same necessities as do myths.

Thus, to speak of the precise point we are treating in my seminars on Freud, little Hans, left in the lurch at the age of five by his symbolic environment, and suddenly forced to face the enigma of his sex and his existence, developed, under the direction of Freud and of his father, Freud's disciple, in mythic form, around the signifying crystal of his phobia, all the permutations possible on a limited number of signifiers.

The operation shows that even on the individual level the solution of the impossible is brought within man's reach by the exhaustion of all possible forms of the impossibilities encountered in solution by recourse to the signifying equation. It is a striking demonstration that illuminates the labyrinth of a case which so far has only been used as a source of demolished fragments. We should be struck, too, by the fact that it is in the coextensivity of the development of the symptom and of its curative resolution that the nature of the neurosis is revealed: whether phobic, hysterical, or obsessive, the neurosis is a question that being poses for the subject 'from where it was before the subject came into the world' (Freud's phrase, which he used in explaining the Oedipal complex to little Hans).

The 'being' referred to is that which appears in a lightning moment in the void of the verb 'to be' and I said that it poses its question for the subject. What does that mean? It does not pose it *before* the subject, since the subject cannot come to the place where it is posed, but it poses it *in place* of the subject, that is to say, in that place it poses the question *with* the subject, as one poses a problem *with* a pen, or as Aristotle's man thought *with* his soul.

Thus Freud introduced the ego into his doctrine,[34] by defining it according to the resistances that are proper to it. What I have tried to convey is that these resistances are of an imaginary nature much in the same sense as those coaptative lures that the ethology of animal behaviour shows us in display or combat, and that these lures are reduced in man to the narcissistic relation introduced by Freud, which I have elaborated in my essay on the mirror stage. I have tried to show that by situating in this ego the synthesis of the perceptual functions in which the sensorimotor selections are integrated, Freud seems to abound in that delegation that is traditionally supposed to represent reality for the ego, and that this reality is all the more included in the suspension of the ego.

For this ego, which is notable in the first instance for the imaginary inertias that it concentrates against the message of the unconscious, operates solely with a view to covering the displacement constituted by the subject with a resistance that is essential to the discourse as such.

That is why an exhaustion of the mechanisms of defence, which Fenichel the practitioner shows us so well in his studies of analytic technique (while his whole reduction on the theoretical level of neuroses and psychoses to genetic anomalies in libidinal development is pure platitude), manifests itself, without Fenichel's accounting for it or realizing it himself, as simply the reverse side of the mechanisms of the unconscious. Periphrasis, hyperbaton, ellipsis, suspension, anticipation, retraction, negation, digression, irony, these are the figures of style (Quintilian's *figurae sententiarum*); as catachresis, litotes, antonomasia, hypotyposis are the tropes, whose terms suggest themselves as the most proper for the labelling of these mechanisms. Can one really see these as mere figures of speech when it is the figures themselves that are the active principle of the rhetoric of the discourse that the analysand in fact utters?

By persisting in describing the nature of resistance as a permanent emotional state, thus making it alien to the discourse, today's psychoanalysts have simply shown that they have fallen under the blow of one of the fundamental truths that Freud rediscovered through psychoanalysis. One is never happy making way for a new truth, for it always means making our way into it: the truth is always disturbing. We cannot even manage to get used to it. We are used to the real. The truth we repress.

Now it is quite specially necessary to the scientist, to the seer, even to the quack, that he should be the only one to *know*. The idea that deep in the simplest (and even sickest) of souls there is something ready to blossom is bad enough! But if someone seems to know as much as they about what we ought to make of it … then the categories of primitive, prelogical, archaic, or even magical thought, so easy to impute to others, rush to our aid! It is not right that these nonentities keep us breathless with enigmas that prove to be only too unreliable.

To interpret the unconscious as Freud did, one would have to be as he was, an encyclopedia of the arts and muses, as well as an assiduous reader of the *Fliegende Blätter*.[35] And the task is made no easier by the fact that we are at the mercy of a thread woven with allusions, quotations, puns, and equivocations. And is that our profession, to be antidotes to trifles?

Yet that is what we must resign ourselves to. The unconscious is neither primordial nor instinctual; what it knows about the elementary is no more than the elements of the signifier.

The three books that one might call canonical with regard to the unconscious – 'The Interpretation of Dreams', 'The Psychopathology of Everyday Life', and 'Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious' – are simply a web of examples whose development is inscribed in the formulas of connexion and substitution (though carried to the tenth degree by their particular complexity – diagrams of them are sometimes provided by Freud by way of illustration); these are the formulas we give to the signifier in its *transference*-function. For in 'The Interpretation of Dreams' it is in the sense of such a function that the term *Übertragung*, or transference, is introduced, which later gave its name to the mainspring of the intersubjective link between analyst and analysand.

Such diagrams are not only constitutive of each of the symptoms in a neurosis, but they alone make possible the understanding of the thematic of its course and resolution. The great case-histories provided by Freud demonstrate this admirably.

To fall back on a more limited incident, but one more likely to provide us with the final seal on our proposition, let me cite the article on fetishism of 1927,[36] and the case Freud reports there of a patient who, to achieve sexual satisfaction, needed a certain shine on the nose (*Glanz auf der Nase*); analysis showed that his early, English-speaking years had seen the displacement of the burning curiosity that he felt for the phallus of his mother, that is to say, for that eminent *manque-à-être*, for that want-to-be, whose privileged signifier Freud revealed to us, into a *glance at the nose*[37] in the forgotten language of his childhood, rather than a *shine on the nose*.[37]

It is the abyss opened up at the thought that a thought should make itself heard in the abyss that provoked resistance to psychoanalysis from the outset. And not, as is commonly said, the emphasis on man's sexuality. This latter has after all been the dominant object in literature throughout the ages. And in fact the more recent evolution of psychoanalysis has succeeded by a bit of comical legerdemain in turning it into a quite moral affair, the cradle and trysting place of oblativity and attraction. The Platonic setting of the soul, blessed and illuminated, rises straight to paradise.

The intolerable scandal in the time before Freudian sexuality was sanctified was that it was so 'intellectual'. It was precisely in that that it showed itself to be the worthy ally of all those terrorists whose plottings were going to ruin society.

At a time when psychoanalysts are busy remodelling psychoanalysis into a right-thinking movement whose crowning expression is the sociological poem of the *autonomous ego*, I would like to say, to all those who are listening to me, how they can recognize bad psychoanalysts; this is by the word they use to deprecate all technical or theoretical research that carries forward the Freudian experience along its authentic lines. That word is '*intellectualization*' – execrable to all

those who, living in fear of being tried and found wanting by the wine of truth, spit on the bread of men, although their slaver can no longer have any effect other than that of leavening.

III The letter, being and the other[38]

Is what thinks in my place, then, another I? Does Freud's discovery represent the confirmation, on the level of psychological experience, of Manicheism?[39]

In fact, there is no confusion on this point: what Freud's researches led us to is not a few more or less curious cases of split personality. Even at the heroic epoch I have been describing, when, like the animals in fairy stories, sexuality talked, the demonic atmosphere that such an orientation might have given rise to never materialized.[40]

The end that Freud's discovery proposes for man was defined by him at the apex of his thought in these moving terms: *Wo es war, soll Ich werden*. I must come to the place where that was.

This is one of reintegration and harmony, I could even say of reconciliation *(Versöhnung)*.

But if we ignore the self's radical ex-centricity to itself with which man is confronted, in other words, the truth discovered by Freud, we shall falsify both the order and methods of psychoanalytic mediation; we shall make of it nothing more than the compromise operation that it has, in effect, become, namely, just what the letter as well as the spirit of Freud's work most repudiates. For since he constantly invoked the notion of compromise as supporting all the miseries that his analysis is supposed to assuage, we can say that any recourse to compromise, explicit or implicit, will necessarily disorient psychoanalytic action and plunge it into darkness.

But neither does it suffice to associate oneself with the moralistic tartufferies of our time or to be forever spouting something about the 'total personality' in order to have said anything articulate about the possibility of mediation.

The radical heteronomy that Freud's discovery shows gaping within man can never again be covered over without whatever is used to hide it being profoundly dishonest.

Who, then, is this other to whom I am more attached than to myself, since, at the heart of my assent to my own identity it is still he who agitates me?

His presence can be understood only at a second degree of otherness, which already places him in the position of mediating between me and the double of myself, as it were with my counterpart.

If I have said that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other (with a capital O), it is in order to indicate the beyond in which the recognition of desire is bound up with the desire for recognition.

In other words this other is the Other that even my lie invokes as a guarantor of the truth in which it subsists.

By which we can also see that it is with the appearance of language the dimension of truth emerges.

Prior to this point, we can recognize in the psychological relation, which can be easily isolated in the observation of animal behaviour, the existence of subjects, not by means of some projective mirage, the phantom of which a certain type of psychologist delights in hacking to pieces, but simply on account of the manifested presence of intersubjectivity. In the animal hidden in his lookout, in the well-laid trap of certain others, in the feint by which an apparent straggler leads a predator away from the flock, something more emerges than in the fascinating display of mating or combat ritual. Yet there is nothing even there that transcends the function of lure in the service of a need or which affirms a presence in that beyond-the-veil where the whole of Nature can be questioned about its design.

For there even to be a question (and we know that it is one Freud himself posed in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'), there must be language. For I can lure my adversary by means of a movement contrary to my actual plan of battle, and this movement will have its deceiving effect only in so far as I produce it in reality and for my adversary.

But in the propositions with which I open peace negotiations with him, what my negotiations propose to him is situated in a third locus which is neither my speech nor my interlocutor.

This locus is none other than the locus of signifying convention, of the sort revealed in the comedy of the sad plaint of the Jew to his crony: 'Why do you tell me you are going to Cracow so I'll believe you are going to Lvov, when you really are going to Cracow?'

Of course the flock-movement I just spoke of could be understood in the conventional context of game-strategy, where it is a rule that I deceive my adversary, but in that case my success is evaluated within the connotation of betrayal, that is to say, in relation to the Other who is the guarantor of Good Faith.

Here the problems are of an order the heteronomy of which is completely misconstrued (*méconnue*) if reduced to an 'awareness of others', or whatever we choose to call it. For the 'existence of the other' having once upon a time reached the ears of the Midas of psychoanalysis through the partition that separates him from the secret meetings of the phenomenologists, the news is new being whispered through the reeds: 'Midas, King Midas, is the other of his patient. He himself has said it.'

What sort of breakthrough is that. The other, what other?

The young André Gide, defying the landlady to whom his mother had confided him to treat him as a responsible person, opening with a key (false only in that it opened all locks of the same make) the lock that this lady took to be a worthy signifier of her educational intentions, and doing it quite obviously for her benefit – what 'other' was he aiming at? She who was supposed to intervene and to whom he would then say: 'Do you think my obedience can be secured with a ridiculous lock.' But by remaining out of sight and holding her peace until that evening in order, after primly greeting his return, to lecture him like a child, she showed him not just another with the face of anger, but another André Gide who is no longer sure, either then or later in thinking back on it, of just what he really meant to do – whose own truth has been changed by the doubt thrown on his good faith.

Perhaps it would be worth our while pausing a moment over this empire of confusion which is none other than that in which the whole human opera-buffa plays itself out, in order to understand the ways in which analysis can proceed not just to restore an order but to found the conditions for the possibility of its restoration.

Kern unseres Wesen, the nucleus of our being, but it is not so much that Freud commands us to seek it as so many others before him have with the empty adage 'Know thyself' – as to reconsider the ways that lead to it, and which he shows us.

Or rather that which he proposes for us to attain is not that which can be the object of knowledge, but that (doesn't he tell us as much?) which creates our being and about which he teaches us that we bear witness to it as much and more in our whims, our aberrations, our phobias and fetishes, as in our more or less civilized personalities.

Madness, you are no longer the object of the ambiguous praise with which the sage decorated the impregnable burrow of his fear; and if after all he finds himself tolerably at home there, it is only because the supreme agent forever at work digging its tunnels is none other than reason, the very Logos that he serves.

So how do you imagine that a scholar with so little talent for the 'commitments' that solicited him in his age (as they do in all ages), that a scholar such as Erasmus held such an eminent place in the revolution of a Reformation in which man has as much of a stake in each man as in all men?

The answer is that the slightest alteration in the relation between man and the signifier, in this case in the procedures of exegesis, changes the whole course of history by modifying the moorings that anchor his being.

It is precisely in this that Freudianism, however misunderstood it has been, and however confused its consequences have been, to anyone capable of perceiving the changes we have lived through in our own lives, is seen to have founded an intangible but radical revolution. There is no point in collecting witnesses to the fact:[41] everything involving not just the human sciences,

but the destiny of man, politics, metaphysics, literature, the arts, advertising, propaganda, and through these even economics, everything has been affected.

Is all this anything more than the discordant effects of an immense truth in which Freud traced for us a clear path? What must be said, however, is that any technique that bases its claim on the mere psychological categorization of its object is not following this path, and this is the case of psychoanalysis today except in so far as we return to the Freudian discovery.

Furthermore, the vulgarity of the concepts by which it recommends itself to us, the embroidery of pseudo-Freudianism (*frofreudisme*) which is no longer anything but decoration, as well as the bad repute in which it seems to prosper, all bear witness to its fundamental betrayal of its founder.

By his discovery, Freud brought within the circle of science the boundary between the object and being that seemed to mark its outer limit.

That this is the symptom and the prelude of a re-examination of the situation of man in the existent such as has been assumed up to the present by all our postulates of knowledge – don't be content, I beg of you, to write this off as another case of Heideggerianism, even prefixed by a neo- that adds nothing to the dustbin style in which currently, by the use of his ready-made mental jetsam, one excuses oneself from any real thought.

When I speak of Heidegger, or rather when I translate him, I at least make the effort to leave the speech he proffers us its sovereign significance.

If I speak of being and the letter, if I distinguish the other and the Other, it is because Freud shows me that they are the terms to which must be referred the effects of resistance and transference against which, in the twenty years I have engaged in what we all call after him the impossible practice of psychoanalysis, I have done unequal battle. And it is also because I must help others not to lose their way there.

It is to prevent the field of which they are the inheritors from becoming barren, and for that reason to make it understood that if the symptom is a metaphor, it is not a metaphor to say so, any more than to say that man's desire is a metonymy. For the symptom *is* a metaphor whether one likes it or not, as desire *is* a metonymy, however funny people may find the idea.

Finally, if I am to rouse you to indignation over the fact that, after so many centuries of religious hypocrisy and philosophical bravado, nothing has yet been validly articulated as to what links metaphor to the question of being and metonymy to its lack, there must be an object there to answer to that indignation both as its instigator and its victim: that object is humanistic man and the credit, hopelessly affirmed, which he has drawn over his intentions.

14–26 May, 1957

Translated by Alan Sheridan

Notes

1 *Codice Atlantico* 145.

2 *Psychanalyse et sciences de l'homme*.

3 The lecture took place on 9 May, 1957, the Amphithéâtre Descartes of the Sorbonne, and the discussion was continued afterwards over drinks.

4 *Die Frage der Laienanalyse, G.W.* **XIV**: 281–3.

5 '*Á la lettre*' [Tr.].

6 This aspect of aphasia, so useful in overthrowing the concept of 'psychological function', which only obscures every aspect of the question, becomes quite clear in the purely linguistic analysis of the two major forms of aphasia worked out by one of the leaders of modern linguistics, Roman Jakobson. See the most accessible of his works, the *Fundamentals of Language* (with Morris Halle), Mouton's Gravenhage, part II, Chapters 1 to 4.

7 We may recall that the discussion of the need for a new language in communist society did in fact take place, and Stalin, much to the relief of those who adhered to his philosophy, put an end to it with the following formulation: language is not a superstructure.

8 By 'linguistics' I mean the study of existing languages (*langues*) in their structure and in the laws revealed therein; this excludes any theory of abstract codes sometimes included under the heading of communication theory, as well as the theory, originating in the physical sciences, called information theory, or any semiology more or less hypothetically generalized.

9 *Psychanalyse et sciences de l'homme.*

10 Cf. the *De Magistro* of St Augustine, especially the chapter 'De significatione locutionis' which I analysed in my seminar of 23 June, 1954.

11 English in the original [Tr.].

12 So, Mr I. A. Richards, author of a work precisely in accord with such an objective, has in another work shown us its application. He took for his purposes a page from Mong-tse (Mencius, to the Jesuits) and called the piece, *Mencius on the Mind.* The guarantees of the purity of the experiment are nothing to the luxury of the approaches. And our expert on the traditional Canon that contains the text is found right on the spot in Peking where our demonstration-model mangle has been transported regardless of cost.

But we shall be no less transported, if less expensively, to see a bronze that gives out bell tones at the slightest contact with thought, transformed into a rag to wipe the blackboard of the most dismaying British psychologism. And not without eventually being identified with the meninx of the author himself – all that remains of him or his object after having exhausted the meaning of the latter and the good sense of the former.

13 Not, unfortunately, the case in the English here – the plural of 'gentleman' being indicated other than by the addition of an 's' [Tr.].

14 Names of different typefaces [Tr.].

15 To which verbal hallucination, *when* it takes this form, opens a communicating door with the Freudian structure of psychosis – a door until now unnoticed (cf. 'On a Question Preliminary to any Possible Treatment of Psychosis', pp. 179–225).

16 The allusions are to the 'I am black, but comely …' of the *Song of Solomon*, and to the nineteenth-century cliché of the 'poor, but honest' woman [Tr.].

17 I spoke in my seminar of 6 June, 1956, of the first scene of *Athalie*, incited by an allusion – tossed off by a high-brow critic in the *New Statesman and Nation* – to the 'high whoredom' of Racine's heroines, to renounce reference to the savage dramas of Shakespeare, which have become compulsional in analytic circles where they play the role of status-symbol for the Philistines.

18 The publication by Jean Starobinski, in *Le Mercure de France* (February 1964) of Saussure's notes on anagrams and their hypogranamatical use, from the Saturnine verses to the writings of Cicero, provide the corroboration that I then lacked (note 1966).

19

'Non! dit l'Arbre, il dit: Non! dans l'étincellement
De sa tête superbe
Que la tempête traite universellement
Comme elle fait one herbe.'

(Paul Valéry, 'Au Platane', *Les Charmes*)

20 I pay homage here to the works of Roman Jakobson – to which I owe much of this formulation; works to which a psychoanalyst can constantly refer in order to structure his own experience, and which render superfluous the 'personal communications' of which I could boast as much as the next fellow.

Indeed, one recognizes in this oblique form of allegiance the style of that immortal couple, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who are virtually indistinguishable, even in the imperfection of their destiny, for it survives by the same method as Jeannot's knife, and for the same reason for which Goethe praised Shakespeare for presenting the character in double form: they represent, in themselves alone, the

whole *Gesellschaft*, the Association itself (*Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, ed. Trunz, Christian Wegner Verlag, Hamburg, **V** (S): 299) – I mean the International Psychoanalytical Association.

We should savour the passage from Goethe as a whole: '*Dieses leise Auftreten dieses Schmiegen und Biegen, dies Jasagen, Streicheln und Schmeicheln, dieses Behendigkeit, dies Schwänzein, diese Allheit und Leerheit, diese rechtliche Schurkerei, diese Unfähigkeit, wie kann sie durch einen Menschen ausgedruckt werden? Es sollten ihrer wenigstens ein Dutzend sein, wenn man sie haben könnte; denn sie bloss in Gesellschaft etwas, sie sind die Gesellschaft …*'

Let us thank also, in this context, the author R. M. Loewenstein of 'Some Remarks on the Role of Speech in Psychoanalytic Technique' (*I.J.P.*, Nov.–Dec., 1956, **XXXVII** (6): 467) for taking the trouble to point out that his remarks are 'based on' work dating from 1952. This is no doubt the explanation for the fact that he has learned nothing from work done since then, yet which he is not ignorant of, as he cites me as their 'editor' (sic).

21 'Sa gerbe n'était pas avare ni haineuse', a line from 'Booz endormi' [Tr.].

22 '*Mot*', in the broad sense, means 'word'. In the narrower sense, however, it means 'a witticism'. The French '*esprit*' is translated, in this context, as 'wit', the equivalent of Freud's *Witz* [Tr.].

'*Esprit*' is certainly the equivalent of the German *Witz* with which Freud marked the approach of his third fundamental work on the unconscious. The much greater difficulty of finding this equivalent in English is instructive: 'wit', burdened with all the discussion of which it was the object from Davenant and Hobbes to Pope and Addison, abandoned its essential virtues to 'humour', which is something else. There only remains the 'pun', but this word is too narrow in its connotation.

23 Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois.

24 Cf. the correspondence; namely letters 107 and 109.

25 Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832), the first scholar to decipher the Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics [Tr.].

26 That is the process by which the results of a piece of research are assured through a mechanical exploration of the entire extent of the field of its object.

27 By referring only to the development of the organism, the typology fails to recognize (*méconnaît*) the structure in which the subject is caught up respectively in phantasy, in drive, in sublimation. I am at present developing the theory of this structure (note 1966).

28 The sign '≡' here designates congruence.

29 S' designating here the term productive of the signifying effect (or significance); one can see that the term is latent in metonymy, patent in metaphor.

30 It is quite otherwise if by posing a question such as 'Why philosophers?' I become more candid than nature, for then I am asking not only the question that philosophers have been asking themselves for all time, but also the one in which they are perhaps most interested.

31 '*Ambiguité de furet*' – literally, 'ferret-like ambiguity'. This is one of a number of references in Lacan to the game 'hunt-the-slipper' (*jeu du furet*) [Tr.].

32 'The nucleus of our being' [Tr.].

33 English in the original [Tr.].

34 This and the next paragraph were rewritten solely with a view to greater clarity of expression (note 1968).

35 A German comic newspaper of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries [Tr.].

36 *Fetischismus, G.W.* **XIV**: 311; 'Fetishism', *Collected Papers* **V**: 198; *Standard Edition* **XXI**: 149.

37 English in the original [Tr.].

38 *La lettre l'être et l'autre*.

39 One of my colleagues went so far in this direction as to wonder if the id (*Es*) of the last phase wasn't in fact the 'bad ego'. (It should now be obvious whom I am referring to – 1966.)

40 Note, nonetheless, the tone with which one spoke in that period of the 'elfin pranks' of the unconscious; a work of Silberer's is called *Der Zufall und die Koboldstreiche des Unbewussten* (Chance and the Elfin Tricks of the Unconscious) – completely anachronistic in the context of our present soul-managers.

41 To pick, the most recent in date, François Mauriac, in the *Figaro littéraire* of 25 May, apologizes for refusing 'to tell the story of his life'. If no one these days can undertake to do that with the old enthusiasm, the

reason is that, 'a half century since, Freud, whatever we think of him' has already passed that way. And after being briefly tempted by the old saw that this is only the 'history of our body'; Mauriac returns to the truth that his sensitivity as a writer makes him face: to write the history of oneself is to write the confession of the deepest part of our neighbours' souls as well.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Jacques Lacan in English

Écrits: A Selection (1966), trans. A. Sheridan, London: Tavistock, 1977.
Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English (1966), trans. B. Fink, New York: Norton, 2007.
Television: A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment (1973), trans. D. Hollier, R. Krauss, and A. Michelson, New York: Norton, 1990.
The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953–1954 (1975), trans. J. Forrester and S. Tomaselli, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955 (1978), ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. S. Tomaselli, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses (1981), ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. R. Grigg, London: Routledge, 1993.
The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book IV: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960 (1986), ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. D. Porter, London: Routledge, 1992.
The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (1973), trans. A. Sheridan, London: Vintage, 1977.
The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis (1991), ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. R. Grigg, New York: Norton, 2006.
The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore: On Feminine Sexuality; The Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972–1973 (1975), ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. B. Fink, New York: Norton, 1998.
My Teaching, trans. D. Macy, London: Verso, 2008.

Further reading

Introductions to Lacan are given by Bowie (1991), Dor (1998), Homer (2005), Lemaire (1977), Levine (2008), Payne (1993), and Žižek (1991, 2007). Marini (1993) and Roustang (1990) examine the factors responsible for the rise of Lacanian psychoanalysis, and Forrester (1991), Nobus (2000), and Weber (2008) assess his relation to Freud. Collections offering a range of critical perspectives are available from Leupin (1991), Rabaté (2003), Thurston (2002), Voruz and Wolf (2007), and Žižek (2006).

The importance of language for Lacan is assessed by Buckwalter (2007), Chaitin (1996), Fink (2004), Ragland-Sullivan (1986), Ragland-Sullivan and Bracher (1991), and Weber (2008). His impact on literary and cultural criticism is explored by Bowie (1988), Coats (2007), Harari (2002), MacCannell (1986), McGowan (2004), Mellard (1991), Rabaté (2001), and Stoltzfus (1996).

For the application of his ideas to film and popular culture, see Chiesa (2006), McGowan and Kunkle (2004), Nolan (2009), and Žižek (1991, 1992).

Lacan the philosopher is addressed by Bencivenga (1996), Chiesa (2007), Ragland-Sullivan (1986), and Roudinesco (1997). Copjec (1994) examines the contest between Lacan and Foucault over psychoanalysis and history. Subjectivity after Lacan is discussed by Fryer (2004), and Holm (2009), and implications for feminism and politics are considered by Campbell (2004), Grosz (1990), Moi (2004), Soler (2006), and Stavrakakis (1999).

E. Bencivenga, 'Kant's Sadism', *Philosophy and Literature*, 1996, vol. 20, pp. 39–46.
M. Bowie, *Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
———, *Lacan*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991.
E. Buckwalter, 'Lacan: an adapted approach to postmodern language', *Essays in Philosophy*, 2007, vol. 8, pp. 1–13.
K. Campbell, *Jacques Lacan and Feminist Epistemology*, London: Routledge, 2004.
G.D. Chaitin, *Rhetoric and Culture in Lacan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

L. Chiesa, 'Tragic transgression and symbolic re-inscription: Lacan with Lars von Trier', *Angelaki*, 2006, vol. 11, pp. 49–62.
———, *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007.
K. Coats, *Looking Glasses and Neverlands: Lacan, Desire, and Subjectivity in Children's Literature*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2007.
J. Copjec, *Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994.
J. Dor, *Introduction to the Reading of Lacan: The Unconscious Structured Like a Language*, ed. J. Feher-Gurewich and S. Fairfield, New York: Other Press, 1998.
B. Fink, *Lacan to the Letter: Reading Écrits Closely*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
J. Forrester, *The Seductions of Psychoanalysis: Freud, Lacan and Derrida*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
D.R. Fryer, *The Intervention of the Other: Ethical Subjectivity in Levinas and Lacan*, New York: Other Press, 2004.
E. Grosz, *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction*, London: Routledge, 1990.
R. Harari, *How James Joyce Made His Name: A Reading of the Final Lacan*, trans. L. Thurston, New York: Other Press, 2002.
L. Holm, *Brunelleschi, Lacan, Le Corbusier: Architecture, Space and the Construction of Subjectivity*, London: Routledge, 2009.
S. Homer, *Jacques Lacan*, London: Routledge, 2005.
A. Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. D. Macey, London: Routledge, 1977.
A. Leupin (ed.), *Lacan and the Human Sciences*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991.
S.Z. Levine, *Lacan Reframed: A Guide for the Arts Student*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2008.
J.F. MacCannell, *Figuring Lacan: Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious*, London: Routledge, 1986.
T. McGowan, *The End of Dissatisfaction? Jacques Lacan and the Emerging Society of Enjoyment*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.
T. McGowan and S. Kunkle (eds), *Lacan and Contemporary Film*, New York: Other Press, 2004.
M. Marini, *Jacques Lacan: The French Context*, trans. A. Tomiche, Piscataway, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1993.
J.M. Mellard, *Using Lacan, Reading Fiction*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991.
T. Moi, 'From femininity to finitude: Freud, Lacan, and feminism, again', *Signs*, 2004, vol. 29, pp. 841–78.
D. Nobus, *Jacques Lacan and the Freudian Practice of Psychoanalysis*, London: Routledge, 2000.
S. Nolan, *Film, Lacan and the Subject of Religion: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Religious Film Analysis*, London: Continuum, 2009.
M. Payne, *Reading Theory: An Introduction to Lacan, Derrida, and Kristeva*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.
J.-M. Rabaté, *Jacques Lacan: Psychoanalysis and the Subject of Literature*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.
——— (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
E. Ragland-Sullivan, *Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis*, London: Routledge, 1986.
E. Ragland-Sullivan and M. Bracher (eds), *Lacan and the Subject of Language*, London: Routledge, 1991.
E. Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan: An Outline of a Life and History of a System of Thought*, Cambridge: Polity, 1997.
F. Roustang, *The Lacanian Delusion*, trans. G. Sims, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
C. Soler, *What Lacan Said about Women: A Psychoanalytic Study*, trans. J. Holland, New York: Other Press, 2006.
Y. Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political*, London: Routledge, 1999.
B. Stoltzfus, *Lacan and Literature: Purloined Pretexts*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.
L. Thurston (ed.), *Re-Inventing the Symptom: Essays on the Final Lacan*, New York: Other Press, 2002.
V. Voruz and B. Wolf (eds), *The Later Lacan: An Introduction*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007.
S. Weber, *Return to Freud: Jacques Lacan's Dislocation of Psychoanalysis*, trans. M. Levine, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
S. Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991.
———, *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out*, New York: Routledge, 1992.
——— (ed.), *Lacan: The Silent Partners*, London: Verso, 2006.
———, *How to Read Lacan*, New York: Norton, 2007.

Chapter 21

LUCE IRIGARAY

INTRODUCTION

Feminist philosophy plays a vital role in challenging traditional conceptual boundaries. It proposes new forms of thought within, and sometimes against, the horizons of experience opened up by psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and poststructuralism. Psychoanalysis occupies a key position in the evolution of feminism. First, it represents a revolutionary theory of subjectivity, where meaning is shown not to reside in certain privileged terms (i.e. patriarchal) but to occur through material, metaphorical transformation. Second, it identifies fundamental aspects of our being, such as language and our general openness to the world, with sexuality. For example, the Oedipus complex, identified by Freud, is transformed by Lacan into a theory of language. This is discussed in more detail below.

There are various kinds of feminism: liberal, Marxist, socialist, psychoanalytic, existentialist, and radical. One of the main distinctions which can be drawn is between those feminists who demand equality with men and those who challenge the structures of thought which frame the debate. The former is the liberal feminist viewpoint, whereas the latter is shared by different positions, e.g. existentialist, psychoanalytic, for which 'radical feminism' often serves as the collective noun. To seek equality, the radicals claim against the liberals, is to seek equality *on male terms*. Addressing the role and the identity of women as issues in isolation, they continue, fails to acknowledge that positions in the debate have been determined by a history of thought which is male-dominated, i.e. patriarchal. It is this order which must be addressed if the concept of 'woman' is to become something more than the obverse of 'man'.

Luce Irigaray (b. 1930), Julia Kristeva, and Hélène Cixous are leading figures in contemporary French radical feminism. Within this, however, they work from different and, at times, diametrically opposed viewpoints. Irigaray and Cixous entertain the notion of an *écriture feminine* or 'feminine writing' which embodies a new, differential, and, arguably, 'tactile' approach to language. The importance given to the body by psychoanalysis as an object under interpretation is used by Irigaray to turn texts in the history of philosophy against themselves, drawing organic, textured language from arguments which outwardly try to suppress the epistemological significance of the body.

Much of Irigaray's writing is a reaction against the psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Lacan. She rejects the claim of her teacher, Jacques Lacan, that language has an Oedipal structure. In the Oedipus complex, identified by Freud, the original, intimate relationship between boy-child and mother is broken when the child realizes that it has to compete with the father for his mother's affections. The three-way relationship between father, mother, and child, Lacan suggests, is the order of language or, to give it Lacan's technical phrase, the 'symbolic order'. Since the subject (the child) now has to negotiate with and through a third term (the father and,

by analogy, the word) to achieve contact with what was once directly and reciprocally in front of him (the mother and, by analogy, external reality), a situation with a linguistic structure comes into being. However, Irigaray argues that Freud's and Lacan's positions are themselves products of patriarchal thought. As she observes, the Oedipus complex applies first and foremost to the boy-child's relationship with the mother, and the penis is the organ which co-ordinates sexuality for both men and women in the works of Freud and Lacan. In the sense that a sign stands for something which is absent, the penis or 'phallus' (the term used in this wider, linguistic context) is seen by Lacan as the sign that stands for the child's pre-Oedipal relationship with the mother which has been lost and, therefore, becomes representative of language in general. Language, including Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, Irigaray asserts, is 'phallocentric'.

The reflexive nature of Irigaray's argument – that the charge of language's male-centredness itself rests upon the male-centred Oedipus complex – is in keeping with her interest in deconstruction. A deconstructive reading of a text searches out those moments when images or distinctions turn against or contradict themselves. In a similar fashion, Irigaray applies the principles and methods of psychoanalysis to philosophical texts in order to subvert their meaning. Arguments, and the images they rely upon, are subject to metaphorical interpretation by her in order to disclose repressed, unconscious orders of signification which can begin to constitute a feminine writing. Irigaray and Lacan had worked closely together at the University of Paris at Vincennes, but her charge of phallocentrism against psychoanalysis, made in *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974), prompted Lacan to terminate her lectureship. Shunned also by the other major universities, she nevertheless retained her position (held from 1964) and received support from the students at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. She became Director of Research in Philosophy at the Centre in 1982. She maintains her own psychoanalytic practice and holds a number of visiting professorships at universities in Europe and North America.

The main claim made by radical feminism against patriarchal knowledge is that it takes truth to be a one-to-one correspondence between statement and world. In any situation, it is assumed, there can be only one true description, and the fit between object and description will be independent of subjective and historical perspectives. Against this, radical feminist philosophy argues for a form of knowledge which accommodates difference. Knowledge, it is argued, is necessarily made from a perspective and thus there will be different accounts of a situation dependent upon the various speakers' points of view. Furthermore, in a hermeneutic vein, knowledge can be generated through the dialogue which occurs between the different positions. In this regard, the body is a vital object for radical feminist thought because it is always an object under interpretation. There are biological differences between the male and female body but the differences are not meaningful in themselves. Rather, they are constructed and appointed (either positively or negatively) relative to a culture and its value system. Thus, the body, as a network of differences in need of evaluation and description, becomes a model for a theory which seeks to show how a respect for difference can be accommodated in the construction of knowledge.

The body is a prominent theme in Irigaray's writing for this reason, and also for the importance she attaches to the epistemological value of the different senses. Sight, she claims, is consistent with patriarchal forms of knowledge in that it is the sense which gives the impression that everything is transparently open to inspection and can be grasped in an instant. In *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1977), she asserts that the penis, although sensitive to touch, is primarily a visual object – erect, upright, clearly open to view – and, as such, stands as the Platonic ideal of the one, true object of knowledge.[1] The vagina, in contrast, is an immanently tactile organ: it 'represents *the horror of nothing to see*' but 'this incompleteness of form...allows her organ to

touch itself over and over again' and 'no one can forbid her to do so, for her genitals are formed of two lips in continuous contact'.[2] Touch becomes a metaphor for the kind of writing which, on Irigaray's terms, is feminine. The writing of women, she argues, does not 'privilege sight' but takes 'each figure back to its source, which is among other things *tactile*. It comes back in touch with itself in that origin without ever constituting in it, constituting itself in it, as some sort of unity.'[3]

The literal translation of 'Così Fan Tutti', the title of Irigaray's essay in this volume (from 1975), is 'Thus do all (women)', but it can also be translated as 'Women are like that'. Irigaray challenges Lacan's position on female sexuality by applying psychoanalysis to '*discourse itself*'. To address female sexuality by referring to anatomy, as Freud and Lacan do, allows the body to serve, in Irigaray's words, 'as proof-alibi for the real difference between the sexes', that is to say, it means that physical or biological difference becomes the basis for sexual difference within psychoanalytic discourse. In contrast, by *applying* psychoanalysis *to discourse*, we get to see how the sexes are 'determined in and through language' whose laws 'have been prescribed by male subjects for centuries'. 'Discourse', it should be noted, is a technical term which should not be understood as a mere synonym for language or dialogue. Rather, in poststructuralism and psychoanalysis, the term acknowledges that language is not a value-free set of signifiers but a series of concepts which embodies a political or ontological, world-determining commitment. In this instance, through a series of close, deconstructive readings of Lacan's *Encore, Le Seminaire XX*, Irigaray shows how women's pleasure is either denied signification in Lacan's discourse or shaped by it into a male fantasy of feminine pleasure.

Why is this discursive study included in an aesthetics reader? As indicated in the 'Introduction' to this *Reader*, aesthetics in post-Kantian philosophy refers not just to art, beauty, and the senses but also to the ways in which these forms of experience have implications for the wider domains of knowledge, morality, and politics. The aesthetic significance of Irigaray's essay is that it displays her deconstruction of Lacan's psychoanalytic discourse, and reveals how the representation of women's pleasure in language always becomes a question of the reinstatement of privileged, patriarchal divisions. As explained in the introduction to Derrida, deconstruction asserts that any attempt to break through language to arrive at the true meaning of a text or to achieve unmediated access to the world will always rely upon or reintroduce the very textual resources from which it tries to escape. Signification is not a straightforward reference to an object or concept (if there is such a thing), but a process in which we are located, a process loaded with values and commitments which are hard, if not impossible, to avoid. On this basis, Irigaray's linguistic selections, conjunctions, omissions, and emphases become gestures which reveal the construction of gender, challenge this construction, and cultivate an approach to language which departs from the notion of a one-to-one correspondence between word and object. There might be the concern that a close-reading of a Lacan seminar is not really representative of Irigaray's own thought or, worse still, places her in a subordinate position. But integrated, contact-driven discussion is a paradigm form of feminist writing: speaking directly or indirectly to others, working with, against, and through them, rather than remaining as a single, isolated, monolithic voice.

Notes

1 L. Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. C. Porter with C. Burke, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985, pp. 26–27.
2 Ibid., pp. 24, 26.
3 Ibid., p. 79.

■ ■ ■

COSÌ FAN TUTTI

LUCE IRIGARAY

'The one who I presume has knowledge is the one I love.'
'Women don't know what they are saying, that's the whole difference between them and me.'

Jacques Lacan, *Encore, Le Séminaire XX*

Psychoanalytic discourse on female sexuality is the discourse of truth. A discourse that tells the truth about the logic of truth: namely, that *the feminine occurs only within models and laws devised by male subjects*. Which implies that there are not really two sexes, but only one. A single practice and representation of the sexual. With its history, its requirements, reverses, lacks, negative(s) … of which the female sex is the mainstay.

This model, a *phallic* one, shares the values promulgated by patriarchal society and culture, values inscribed in the philosophical corpus: property, production, order, form, unity, visibility … and erection.

Repeating this Western tradition to some extent unwittingly, and reproducing the scene in which it is represented, psychoanalysis brings the truth of this tradition to light, a *sexual* truth this time.

Thus, with regard to 'the development of a normal woman,' we learn, through Freud, that there is and can be only one single motivating factor behind it: 'penis envy,' that is, the desire to appropriate for oneself the genital organ that has a cultural monopoly on value. Since women don't have it, they can only covet the one men have, and, since they cannot possess it, they can only seek to find equivalents for it. Furthermore, they can find fulfillment only in motherhood, by bringing a child, a 'penis substitute,' into the world; and for the woman's happiness to be complete, the child must have a penis himself. The perfect achievement of the feminine destiny, according to Freud, lies in reproducing the male sex, at the expense of the woman's own. Indeed, in this view, woman never truly escapes from the Oedipus complex. She remains forever fixated on the desire for the father, remains subject to the father and to his law, for fear of losing his love, which is the only thing capable of giving her any value at all.[1]

But the truth of the truth about female sexuality is restated even more rigorously when psychoanalysis takes *discourse itself* as the object of its investigations. Here, anatomy is no longer available to serve, to however limited an extent, as proof-alibi for the real difference between the sexes. The sexes are now defined only as they are determined in and through language. Whose laws, it must not be forgotten, have been prescribed by male subjects for centuries.

This is what results: 'There is no woman who is not excluded by the nature of things, which is the nature of words, and it must be said that, if there is something they complain a lot about at the moment, that is what it is – except that they don't know what they are saying, that's the whole difference between them and me.'[2]

The statement is clear enough. Women are in a position of exclusion. And they may complain about it … But it is man's discourse, inasmuch as it sets forth the law – 'that's the whole difference between them and me'? – which can know what there is to know about that exclusion. And which furthermore perpetuates it. Without much hope of escape, for women. Their exclusion is *internal* to an order from which nothing escapes: the order of (man's) discourse. To the objection that this discourse is perhaps not all there is, the response will be that it is women who are 'not-all.'

From this encircling projective machinery, no reality escapes unscathed. Alive. Every 'body' is transformed by it. This is the only way for the 'subject' to enjoy the body, after having chopped it up, dressed it, disguised it, mortified it in his fantasies. What is disturbing is that of these fantasies he makes laws, going so far as to confuse them with science – which no reality resists. The whole is already circumscribed and determined in and by his discourse.

'There is no prediscursive reality. Every reality is based upon and defined by a discourse. This is why it is important for us to notice what analytic discourse consists of, and not to overlook one thing, which is no doubt of limited significance, namely the fact that in this discourse we are talking about what the verb "fuck" expresses perfectly. We are speaking about fucking – a verb, in French *foutre* – and we are saying that it's not working.'

It's not working … Let us deal with this on the basis of logical imperatives. What poses problems in reality turns out to be justified by a logic that has already ordered reality as such. Nothing escapes the circularity of this law.

So how then are women, that 'reality' that is somewhat resistant to discourse, to be defined?

'The sexualized being of these not-all women is not channeled through the body, but through what results from a logical requirement in speech. Indeed, the logic, the coherence inscribed in the fact that language exists and that it is external to the bodies that are agitated by it, in short the Other that is becoming incarnate, so to speak, as a sexualized being, requires this one-by-one procedure.'

Female sexualization is thus the effect of a logical requirement, of the existence of a language that is transcendent with respect to bodies, which would necessitate, in order – nevertheless – to become incarnate, 'so to speak,' taking women one by one. Take that to mean that woman does not exist, but that language exists. That woman does not exist owing to the fact that language – a language – rules as master, and that she threatens – as a sort of 'prediscursive reality'? – to disrupt its order.

Moreover, it is inasmuch as she does not exist that she sustains the desire of these 'speaking beings' that are called men: 'A man seeks a woman – this is going to strike you as odd – owing to something that is located only in discourse, since, if what I am suggesting is true, namely that woman is not-all, there is always something in her which escapes discourse.'

Man seeks her out, since he has inscribed her in discourse, but as lack, as fault or flaw.

Might psychoanalysis, in its greatest logical rigor, be a negative theology? Or rather the negative of theology? Since what is postulated as the cause of desire is lack as such.

Concerning the movement of negative theology, psychoanalytic discourse also neglects the work on projections, whereby God is disinvested of worldly predicates, and of all predication. The phallic obstacle struggles against letting itself be disappropriated, and the Other will remain the place where its formations are inscribed.

But to get rid of the body, for a psychoanalyst, is not always an easy thing to do. How can the logical machinery take care of that?

Fortunately, there are women. Indeed, if the sexualized being of these 'not-all' women is not a function of the body (at least not their own bodies), they will nevertheless have to serve as the object *a*, that bodily remainder. The being that is sexualized female in and through discourse is also a place for the deposit of the remainders produced by the operation of language. For this to be the case, woman has to remain a body without organs.

This being so, nothing that has to do with women's erogenous zones is of the slightest interest to the psychoanalyst. 'Then they call it whatever they like, that *vaginal* pleasure, they talk about the rear pole of the opening of the uterus and other bullshit, that's the word for it.'

The geography of feminine pleasure is not worth listening to. Women are not worth listening to, especially when they try to speak of their pleasure: 'they don't know what they are saying,' 'about this pleasure, woman knows nothing,' 'what makes my suggestions somewhat plausible is that since we have been begging them, begging them on our knees – I was speaking last time of women analysts – to try to tell us, well, mum's the word. We've never managed to get anything out of them,' '*on the subject of female sexuality, our lady analyst colleagues tell us … not everything*. It's quite remarkable. They haven't made the slightest progress on the question of female sexuality. There must be an internal reason for this, connected with the structure of the pleasure mechanism.'

The question whether, in his logic, they can articulate anything at all, whether they can be heard, is not even raised. For raising it would mean granting that there may be some other logic, and one that upsets his own. That is, a logic that challenges mastery.

And to make sure this does not come up, the right to experience pleasure is awarded to a statue. 'Just go look at Bernini's statue in Rome, you'll see right away that St. Theresa is coming, there's no doubt about it.'

In Rome? So far away? To look? At a statue? Of a saint? Sculpted by a man? What pleasure are we talking about? Whose pleasure? For where the pleasure of the Theresa in question is concerned, her own writings are perhaps more telling.

But how can one 'read' them when one is a 'man'? The production of ejaculations of all sorts, often prematurely emitted, makes him miss, in the desire for identification with the lady, what her own pleasure might be all about.

And … his?

But the fact that the sexual relation is in that respect incapable of articulation is what allows him to keep on talking: 'the practice of speech makes no allowance for the relation between the sexes, even though it is only from that starting point that what fills in for that relation can be articulated.'

So if the relation were to come about, everything that has been stated up to now would count as an effect-symptom of its avoidance? It's all very well to know this; to hear oneself say it is not the same thing. Hence the necessary silence concerning the pleasure of those statue-women, the only ones who are acceptable in the logic of his desire.

'What does that mean? – except that a field that is nevertheless not nothing turns out to be unknown. The field in question is that of all beings who assume the status of woman – if indeed that being assumes anything at all of her own fate.'

How could that 'being' do so, since it is assigned within a discourse that excludes, and by its very 'essence,' the possibility that it might speak for itself?

So it would be a question of legislating on the relation of that being to the 'body,' and on the way it can be sexually enjoyed by subjects. A delicate economic problem, for it harbors non-sense. 'In other words, what we're saying is that love is impossible, and that the sexual relation is engulfed in non-sense, which doesn't diminish in the slightest the interest we must take in the Other.'

It is appropriate then to proceed prudently – to bed. 'We're simply reduced to a little embrace, like this, we'll settle for a forearm or anything else at all – ow.'

Even for so little? Pain? Surprise? Being torn apart? No doubt that part was not yet 'corporealized in a signifying manner'? Not sufficiently transmuted into an 'enjoying substance'?

'Do we not have here precisely what is presupposed by the psychoanalytic experience? – the substance of the body, on condition that it be defined only by what enjoys itself. A property of the living body no doubt, but we don't know what it is to be living aside from this one thing: that a body enjoys itself. It only enjoys itself by corporealizing itself in a signifying manner. Which

implies something other than the *partes extra partes* of extended substance. As Sade, that sort of Kantian, emphasizes admirably, one can take pleasure only in a part of the body of the Other, for the simple reason that one has never seen a body roll itself up around the body of the Other so completely as to include and incorporate it by phagocytosis.' What is at issue is thus 'the *enjoying of a body*, of the body that, as Other, symbolizes it, and perhaps includes something that serves to bring about the delineation of another form of substance, the enjoying substance.'

'Ow …' from the other side. What are we going to have to go through in order to bring about this transformation? How, how many times, are we going to have to be cut into 'parts,' 'hammered,' 'recast …' in order to become sufficiently signifying? Substantial enough? All that without knowing anything about it. Hardly a twinge …

But 'enjoying has this fundamental property that it is finally one body that is enjoying a part of the Other's body. But that part also enjoys – it gratifies the Other to a greater or lesser extent, but it is a fact that the Other cannot remain indifferent to it.'

It is a fact. It gratifies, more or less. But that does not seem to be – for him – the question. The question lies rather in the means of attaining a more-than-corporal over-pleasure.

Over-pleasure? Surplus value? This premium of pleasure in knowledge should not – if possible … – make you forget the time for understanding. If you skip over this time, your ignorance gives an over-pleasure to (his) logic. Hence an underpleasure, if only that of his knowledge. Which he enjoys – even so … – more than you. Allowing yourselves to be seduced too quickly, to be satisfied too soon(?), you are accomplices of the surplus value from which his speech draws an advantage over your unwilling body.

Over-pleasure has to do, during this time, with the body – of the Other. That is, for the subject, an over-pleasure of what instates it as a speaking being.

Thus her body is not at issue, 'the dear woman,' but rather what she is made to uphold of the operation of a language that is unaware of itself. Understand, for her, her ignorance as to what is happening to her …

Which he explains, moreover. 'That is why I say that the imputation of the unconscious is a phenomenon of unbelievable charity. They know, they know, subjects do. But in the end, all the same, they don't know all. At the level of this not-all, there is nothing but the Other not to know. It is the Other that makes the not-all, precisely in that the Other is the element of the not-knowledgeable-at-all in this not-all. Thus, momentarily, it can be useful to hold the Other responsible for this (which is what analysis comes to in the most overt fashion, except that no one notices it): if the libido is only masculine, it is only from that place where she is whole, the dear woman – that is to say, from that place where man sees her, and only from there – that the dear woman can have an unconscious.'

There it is: woman has no unconscious except the one man gives her. Mastery clearly acknowledges itself, except that no one notices it. Enjoying a woman, psychoanalyzing a woman, amounts then, for a man, to reappropriating for himself the unconscious that he has lent her. All the same, she continues to pay, and then some … with her body.

An intolerable debt of which he acquits himself by fantasizing that she wants to take the part of his own body that he values most highly. In his turn he skips a logical step. If she wants something, it is by virtue of the unconscious that he has 'imputed' to her. She wills nothing but what he attributes to her. If he forgets this moment when the predicate is constituted – his predicates – he is in danger of losing it as something he can enjoy. But is this not the way the renewal of his desire is assured?

'And what good does that do?' For whom? 'It serves, as we all know, to get the speaking being – here reduced to man – to speak, that is – I don't know whether you have noticed this in analytic theory – to exist only as mother.'

Woman as womb, the unconscious womb of man's language: for her own part, she would have no relation to 'her' unconscious except one that would be marked by an essential dispossession. In absence, ecstasy, … and silence. Ek-sistence falling short of, or going beyond, any subject.

How, from such ravishings, does she return to the society of men? 'For that pleasure in which she is not-all, that is, which makes her somewhere absent as a subject, she will find the cork in that little *a* which will be her child.'

Yes, of course … Still … Without a child, no father? Nor any solution, under the law, for woman's desire? No possible (en)closing of this question in a reproductive maternal function of body-corks plugging up, solidly, the breach of the absence of sexual relations. And the abyss with which it threatens, indefinitely, any social construction, symbolic or imaginary. What – who? – are these *a* corks good for, then?

Anything, at any rate, so long as she is not a 'subject,' so long as she cannot disrupt through her speech, her desire, *her* pleasure, the operation of the language that lays down the law, the prevailing organization of power.

She is even granted, provided that she holds her peace, a privileged relation with 'God' – meaning, with phallic circulation. So long as, by remaining absent as 'subject,' she lets them keep, even guarantees that they can keep, the position of mastery. However, this is a somewhat risky business … What if she were to discover there the cause of their cause? In the pleasure of 'this *she* who does not exist and who signifies nothing'? This 'she' that women might well understand, one day, as the projection onto that in-fant 'being' – which they represent for him – of his relation to nihilism.

For they don't know all, the subjects. And, on the side of the cause, they might well let themselves be overrun for having made the Other bear too much of it. The problem is that they have the law, still, on their side, and they don't hesitate, when the occasion arises, to use force …

*

So there is, *for women*, no possible law for their pleasure. No more than there is any possible discourse. Cause, effect, goal … law and discourse form a single system. And if women – according to him – can say nothing, can know nothing, of their own pleasure, it is because they cannot in any way order themselves within and through a language that would be on some basis their own. Or … his?

Women's enjoyment is – for them, but always according to him – essentially an-archic and a-teleological. For the imperative that is imposed on them – but solely from the outside, and not without violence – is: 'enjoy without law.' That is to say, according to the science of psychoanalysis, without desire. When that strange state of 'body' that men call women's pleasure turns up, it is gratuitous, accidental, unforeseen, 'supplementary' to the essential – a state about which women know nothing, from which they do not – therefore – truly derive pleasure. But which escapes men's grasp in their phallic economy. A sort of 'sensation' – a test? – that 'assails' them and also 'assists' them, when it happens to them.

Not entirely by chance, even so: men cannot do without that state as proof of the existence of a relation between body and soul. As symptom of the existence of a 'substantive component,' of a 'substantive union between soul and body,' whose function is ensured by the 'enjoying substance.'

As no intelligible entity alone can carry out this proof or test, responsibility for it has to be left to the domain of sensation. For example, to the pleasure of woman. A woman. A body-matter marked by their signifiers, a prop for their souls-fantasies. The place where their encoding as speaking subjects is inscribed and where the 'objects' of their desire are projected. The schism and the gap between those two, transferred onto her body, bring her to pleasure – in spite of everything – but do not keep her from being, or from believing herself to be, 'frigid.' Pleasure without pleasure: the shock of a remainder of 'silent' body-matter that shakes her at intervals, in the interstices, but of which she remains ignorant. 'Saying' nothing of this pleasure after all, thus not enjoying it. This is how she sustains, for them, the dual role of the impossible and the forbidden.

If there is such a thing – still – as feminine pleasure, then, it is because men need it in order to maintain themselves in their own existence. It is *useful* to them: it helps them bear what is intolerable in their world as speaking beings, to have a soul foreign to that world: a fantasmatic one. And in spite of everything, this soul is to be 'patient and courageous' – a-musing qualities where fantasies are concerned. It is quite obvious who has to assume the responsibility for preserving this fantasy. Women don't have a soul: they serve as guarantee for man's.

But it does not suffice, of course, for this soul to remain simply external to their universe. It must also be rearticulated with the 'body' of the speaking subject. It is *necessary* that the fusion of the soul – fantasmatic – and the body – transcribed from language – be accomplished with the help of their 'instruments': in feminine sexual pleasure.

This rather spiritualistically love-laden operation has an alibi: it is accomplished by and for man only in perversion. That makes it, on the surface at least, more diabolical than contemplation of the Almighty. It remains to be seen just how that settles the question decisively. At best, does the alibi not serve to feign its deferral? A perverse decorum intervenes.

But men insist that women can say nothing of their pleasure. Thereby they confess the limit of their own knowledge. For 'when one is a man, one sees in the woman partner a means of self-support, a footing on which to stand (oneself) narcissistically.'

From this point on, does not that ineffable, ecstatic pleasure take the place, for men, of a Supreme Being, whom they need narcissistically but who ultimately eludes their knowledge? Does it not occupy – for them – the role of God? With the requirement, for them, that it be discreet enough not to disturb them in the logic of their desire. For God has to be there so that subjects may speak, or rather speak about him. But 'He' has, for 'His' part, nothing to say on this/to these subject(s). It is up to men to enact his laws. And to subject him, in particular, to their ethic.

Sexual pleasure is engulfed then in the body of the Other. It is 'produced' because the Other, in part, escapes the grasp of discourse.

Phallicism compensates for this discursive crisis, sustaining itself upon the Other, nourishing itself with the Other, desiring itself through the Other, even without ever relating to it as such. A barrier, a break, a fantasmatic cutting-out, a signifying economy, an order, a law, govern the enjoyment of the body of the Other. Henceforth subject to enumeration: one by one.

Women will be taken, tested, one by one, in order to avoid non-sense. To woman's not-all in the order of the expressible in discourse there is a corresponding necessity of having them all, at least potentially, all of them, in order to make them bear the fault of the unsayable, while they dispose, even so, of that – last-born – substance called enjoying. The lack of access to discourse in the body of the Other is transformed into intervals separating all women from one another. The ek-stasy of the Other with respect to pronounceable language – which of course has to subsist as the ongoing cause of the still-corporal pleasure – is moderated, measured, mastered in the counting-up of women.

But this fault, this gap, this hole, this abyss – in the operations of discourse – will turn out to be obscured as well by another substance: extension. Subject to assessment by modern science. 'The famous extended substance, complement of the (thinking) (female) Other, is not gotten rid of so easily either, since it is modern space, the stuff of pure space, like what is called pure spirit, we cannot say that this is promising.'

The place of the Other, the body of the Other, will then be spelled out in topo-logy. At the point nearest to the coalescence of discourse and fantasy, in the truth of an ortho-graphy of space, the possibility of the sexual relation is going to be missed.

For to put the accent back on space was – perhaps – to restore some chance for the sexual pleasure of the other – woman. But to seek once again to make a science of it amounts to bringing it back inside the logic of the subject. To giving an over-and-beyond back over to the same. To reducing the other to the Other of the Same. Which could also be interpreted as submitting the real to the imaginary of the speaking subject.

But isn't the surest pleasure of all the pleasure of talking about love? What is more, in order to tell the truth?

'Talk about love, psychoanalytic discourse really does nothing else. And how can we help feeling that with respect to all that can be articulated since the discovery of scientific discourse, it is purely and simply a waste of time? The claim of analytic discourse – and this is perhaps, after all, the reason for its emergence at a certain point in scientific discourse – is that talking about love is in itself a pleasure.'

The pleasure with which psychoanalysts are satisfied? They who know – at least those who are capable of knowing something – that there is no such thing as a sexual relation, that what has stood in its stead for centuries – consider the whole history of philosophy – is love. As this latter is an effect of language, those who know can limit themselves to dealing directly with the cause. A cause thus keeps talking …

And that homosexual a-musement is not about to give out. Since 'there is no such thing,' since 'it is impossible to posit the sexual relation. Here is where the vanguard of psychoanalytic discourse is positioned, and it is on this basis that it determines the status of all the other discourses.'

That the sexual relation has no *as such*, that it cannot even be *posited* as such: one cannot but subscribe to such affirmations. They amount to saying that the discourse of truth, the discourse of 'de-monstration,' cannot incorporate the sexual relation within the economy of its logic. But still, does that not amount to saying that there is no possible sexual relation, claiming that there is no exit from this *logos*, which is wholly assimilated to the discourse of knowledge?

Is it not, therefore, the same thing as judging the historical privilege of the *demonstrable*, the *thematizable*, the *formalizable*, to be a-historical? Might psychoanalysis remain entangled in the discourse of truth? Speaking of love, as has always been done. A little more scientifically? With a little more provision for enjoyment? And so bound once again to the speech act alone? The surest way of perpetuating the phallic economy. Which, of course, goes hand in hand with the economy of truth.

For women, that would pose a problem. They who know so little. Especially where their sex is concerned. Their sex that tells – them – nothing. It is only through the pleasure of the 'body' – of the Other? – that they might articulate something. But men would understand nothing about it, because what they enjoy is the enjoyment of the organ: the phallic obstacle.

For women, the enjoyment of the 'body'; for men, that of the 'organ.' The relation between the sexes would take place within the Same. But a bar or slash – or two? – would split them in two – or three: which would no longer be reassembled except in the workings of discourse. The

truth of consciousness, the truth of the 'subject' of the unconscious, the truth of the silence of the body of the Other.

Sexual intercourse between what may or may not be said of the unconscious – distinction of the sexes in terms of the way they inhabit or are inhabited by language – might be best accomplished in the analytic session. It would fail everywhere else. Because of that division of the sexes in the (sexual) relation: at the bar.

A bar which, of course, preserves the pretense that the other exists. That the other is irreducible to the same. Since the subject cannot enjoy it as such. Since the other is always lacking to itself. Can there be a better guarantee of the existence of the other? Of the Other of the Same.

For if we define the sexes in this way, are we not brought back to the traditional division between the intelligible and the perceptible? The fact that the perceptible may turn out in the end to be written with a capital letter marks its subordination to the intelligible order. To the intelligible, moreover, as the place of inscription of forms. A fact which must never be known simply.

The Other would be subject to inscription without its knowledge. As is already the case in Plato? The 'receptacle' receives the marks of everything, understands and includes everything – except itself – but its relation to the intelligible is never actually established. The receptacle can reproduce everything, 'mime' everything, except itself: it is the womb of mimicry. The receptacle would thus in some way know everything – since it receives everything – without knowing anything about it, and especially without knowing itself. And it would not have access to its own function with regard to language or to the signifier in general, since it would have to be the (still perceptible) support of that function. Which would give it an odd relation to ek-sistence. Ek-sisting with respect to every form (of) 'subject,' it would not exist in itself.

The relation to the Other of/by/in/through … the Other is impossible: 'The Other has no Other.' Which may be understood as meaning: there is no meta-language, except inasmuch as the Other *already stands for it*, suspending in its own ek-sistence the possibility of an other. For if there were some other – without that leap, necessarily ek-static, of the capital letter – the entire autoerotic, auto-positional, auto-reflexive economy … of the subject, or the 'subject,' would find itself disturbed, driven to distraction. The impossible 'self-affection' of the Other by itself – of the other by herself? – would be the condition making it possible for any subject to form his/her/its desires. The Other serves as matrix/womb for the subject's signifiers; such would be the cause of its desire; of the value, also, of the instruments it uses to restore its grip on what thus defines it. But the pleasure of the organ as such would finally cut it off from the object that it seeks. The organ itself, formal and active, takes itself as its end, and thus bungles its copulation with 'perceptible matter.' The prerogative of technical power makes the phallus the obstacle to the sexual relation.

Besides, the only relation desired would be to the mother: to the conceiving-nourishing 'body' of signifiers. Anatomy, at least, no longer encumbers the distribution of sexual roles … With one exception: since there is no possible woman for man's desire, since woman is defined only through the fact that he makes her uphold discourse, and especially its gap, 'for that pleasure in which she is not-all, that is, which makes her somewhere absent from herself, absent as subject, she will find the cork in that little *a* that will be her child.'

This quotation indeed bears repetition: anatomy is reintroduced here in the form of the necessary production of the child. A less scientistic but more strictly metaphysical postulate than in Freudian theory.

As for woman's nonexistence, 'if any discourse proves it to you, it is surely analytic discourse, by putting into play this notion, that woman will be taken only *quoad matrem*. Woman comes into play in the sexual relation only as mother.'

That woman is 'taken only *quoad matrem*' is inscribed in the entire philosophic tradition. It is even one of the conditions of its possibility. One of the necessities, also, of its foundation: it is from (re)productive earth-mother-nature that the production of the logos will attempt to take away its power, by pointing to the power of the beginning(s) in the monopoly of the origin.

Psychoanalytic theory thus utters the truth about the status of female sexuality, and about the sexual relation. But it stops there. Refusing to interpret the historical determinants of its discourse – ' . . . that thing I detest for the best of reasons, that is, History' – and in particular what is implied by the up to now exclusively masculine sexualization of the application of its laws, it remains caught up in phallocentrism, which it claims to make into a universal and eternal value.

*

What remains, then, would be the pleasure of speaking of love. A pleasure already, and still, enjoyed by the ancient soul. A pleasure the science of which psychoanalytic theory would elaborate. For an over-pleasure? But of what? Of whom? And between whom and whom?

An impertinent question: pleasure could never be found in a relation. Except in a relation to the same. The narcissistic pleasure that the master, believing himself to be unique, confuses with that of the One.

How, then, can there be love, or pleasure of the other? Except by speaking to oneself about it? Circumscribing the abyss of negative theology in order to become ritualized in a style – of courtly love? Brushing against the Other as limit, but reappropriating him/her to oneself in the figures, the carvings, the signifiers, the letters of love. Surrounding, adorning, engulfing, interpellating oneself with the Other, in order to speak oneself: the language of love. Speaking to oneself about it with the Other in discourse, in order to speak love to oneself.

But it must be recalled that, according to him, 'courtly love appears at the point where homosexual a-musement had fallen into supreme decadence, into that sort of impossible bad dream called feudalism. At that level of political degeneration, it must have become apparent that, on the woman's side, there was something that couldn't work any more at all.'

The fief, now, is discourse. 'The impossible bad dream called feudalism' has not stopped trying to impose its order. Rather it is increasingly subtle in its objects and modes of appropriation. In its ways of (re)defining domains. Of circumventing those who already have territories, lords and vassals.

From this point of view, psychoanalytic discourse, inasmuch as 'it determines the real status of all other discourse,' would have a chance of winning out and establishing its empire. Going back under the fences, reworking the fields, reevaluating their codes, with respect to another order – that of the unconscious – it could extend its domination over or under all the others.

So much power causes him to forget sometimes that this power comes to him only at the price of renouncing a certain model of mastery and servitude. But this discourse, like all the others – more than all the others? – that he reproduces in applying their logic to the sexual relation, perpetuates the subjection of woman. Woman for whom there would be no more space except at the very heart of discursive operations, like an unconscious subjected to the inexorable silence of an immutable reality.

There is no longer any need, then, for her to be there to court him. The ritual of courtly love can be played out in language alone. One style is enough. One that pays its respects and attention to the gaps in speech, to the not-all in discourse, to the hollowness of the Other, to the half-said, even to the truth. Not without coquetry, seductions, intrigues, enigmas, and even … ejaculations – whose prematurity is more or less retarded by their passage into language – punctuating the movements of identification with the lady's pleasure. 'A perfectly refined way to make up for the absence of the sexual relation by pretending that we are the ones who are placing obstacles in its way.'

'Courtly love is for the man, whose lady was entirely, in the most servile sense, the subject, the only way to cope elegantly with the absence of the sexual relation.'

Since this relation is still impossible, according to the psychoanalyst, it is essential that ever more 'elegant' procedures be fashioned to substitute for it. The problem is that they claim to make a law of this impotence itself, and continue to subject women to it.

Translated by Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke

Notes

1 For a presentation of Freud's positions on female sexuality, see Luce Irigaray, 'Psychoanalytic Theory: Another Look', *This Sex Which Is Not One*. For a detailed critique, see Luce Irigaray, *Speculum de l'autre femme* (Paris, 1974).

2 This quotation and all other quoted passages in the rest of this section are translated from Jacques Lacan, *Encore, Le Séminaire XX* (Paris, 1975).

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Luce Irigaray in English

Speculum of the Other Woman (1974), trans. G.C. Gill, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
This Sex Which Is Not One (1977), trans. C. Porter with C. Burke, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.
Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche (1980), trans. G.C. Gill, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
Elemental Passions (1982), eds J. Collier and J. Still, New York: Routledge, 1992.
The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger (1983), trans. M.B. Mader, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999.
An Ethics of Sexual Difference (1984), trans. C. Burke and G.C. Gill, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.
To Speak Is Never Neutral (1985), trans. G. Schwab, New York: Routledge, 2002.
Sexes and Genealogies (1987), trans. G.C. Gill, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
Thinking the Difference: For a Peaceful Revolution (1989), trans. K. Montin, New York: Routledge, 1994.
Je, Tu, Nous: Towards a Culture of Difference (1990), trans. A. Martin, New York: Routledge, 1993.
I Love to You: Sketch of a Possible Felicity in History (1990), trans. A. Martin, New York: Routledge, 1996.
Democracy Begins Between Two (1994), trans. K. Anderson, New York: Routledge, 2000.
To Be Two (1997), trans. M.M. Rhodes and M.F. Cocito-Monoc, New York: Routledge, 2001.
Between East and West: From Singularity to Community (1999), trans. S. Pluhácek, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
Why Different?, ed. S. Lotringer, trans. C. Collins, New York: Semiotext(e), 2000.
The Way of Love, London: Continuum, 2004.
Sharing the World: From Intimate to Global Relations, London: Continuum, 2008.
Conversations, London: Continuum, 2008.
The Irigaray Reader, ed. Margaret Whitford, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
Luce Irigaray: Key Writings, ed. K. Hirsch, London: Continuum, 2004.

Further reading

Introductions to Irigaray are given by Donovan (2005) and Grosz (1985), and Burke *et al.* (1994) offer critical commentaries from different perspectives.

Irigaray's engagement with other philosophers is explored by Chanter (1995, 2002), Fielding (2001), Hodge (2003), Huntington (1998), Lehtinen (2007), Lorraine (1999), Walker (2006), and Yancy (2002), with Whitford (1991) concentrating upon the psychoanalytic foundation of her philosophy.

Cooper (2000), Grosz (1994), and Vasseleu (1998) focus on her approach to the body and the senses, while Bloodsworth (1999), Deutscher (2002), Leeuwen (2010), Perpich (2003), and Stone (2006) examine her understanding of sexual difference. La Caze (2005) looks at Irigaray on love.

For an indication of how various art forms have drawn upon Irigaray's thought, see Bainbridge (film) (2008), Chanter (tragedy) (2002), Irigaray and Green (various) (2008), Robinson (visual arts) (2006), and Summers-Bremner (dance) (2000).

C. Bainbridge, *A Feminine Cinematics: Luce Irigaray, Women and Film*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
M.K. Bloodsworth, 'Embodiment and ambiguity: Luce Irigaray, sexual difference, and "race"', *International Studies in Philosophy*, 1999, vol. 31, pp. 69–90.
C. Burke, N. Schor, and M. Whitford (eds), *Engaging with Irigaray*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
M. La Caze, 'Love, that indispensable supplement: Irigaray and Kant on love and respect', *Hypatia*, 2005, vol. 20, pp. 92–114.
T. Chanter, *Ethics of Eros: Irigaray's Re-Writing of the Philosophers*, New York: Routledge, 1995.
———, 'Looking at Hegel's Antigone through Irigaray's speculum', in D. Glowacka (ed.), *Between Ethics and Aesthetics: Crossing the Boundaries*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.
S. Cooper, 'Luce Irigaray: reading and writing the body', *Modern French Identities*, 2000, vol. 4, pp. 135–51.
P. Deutscher, *A Politics of Impossible Difference: The Later Work of Luce Irigaray*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.
S.K. Donovan, 'Luce Irigaray', *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, eds J. Fieser and B. Dowden, 2005. Online. Available HTTP: http://www.iep.utm.edu/irigaray/#H6 (accessed 22 July 2010).
H. Fielding, '"Only blood would be more red": Irigaray and Merleau-Ponty and the ethics of sexual difference', *Journal of the British Society for Philosophy*, 2001, vol. 32, pp. 147–59.
E. Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985.
———, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994.
J. Hodge, 'Feminism and utopia: Irigaray reading Kant', *Women*, 2003, vol. 14, pp. 195–209.
P.J. Huntington, *Ecstatic Subjects, Utopia, and Recognition: Kristeva, Heidegger, Irigaray*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.
L. Irigaray and M. Green (eds), *Luce Irigaray: Teaching*, New York: Continuum, 2008.
A. Leeuwen, 'Sexuate difference, ontological difference: between Irigaray and Heidegger', *Continental Philosophy Review*, 2010, vol. 43, pp. 111–26.
V. Lehtinen, 'On philosophical style: Michele Le Doeuff and Luce Irigaray', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 2007, vol. 14, pp. 109–26.
T. Lorraine, *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
D. Perpich, 'Subjectivity and sexual difference: new figures of the feminine in Irigaray and Cavarero', *Continental Philosophy Review*, 2003, vol. 36, pp. 391–413.
H. Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray: The Politics of Art by Women*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2006.
A. Stone, *Luce Irigaray and the Philosophy of Sexual Difference*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
E. Summers-Bremner, 'Reading Irigaray, dancing', *Hypatia*, 2000, vol. 15, pp. 90–124.
C. Vasseleu, *Textures of Light: Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau Ponty*, London: Routledge, 1998.
M.B. Walker, 'An ethics of reading: Adorno, Levinas, and Irigaray', *Philosophy Today*, 2006, vol. 50, pp. 223–38.
M. Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*, New York: Routledge, 1991.
G. Yancy, 'Lyotard and Irigaray: challenging the (white) male philosophical metanarrative voice', *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 2002, vol. 33, pp. 563–80.

Chapter 22

JULIA KRISTEVA

INTRODUCTION

Julia Kristeva (b. 1941) came to Paris from Bulgaria as a student in 1965, and straight away became involved in the city's intellectual life, attending the seminars of Roland Barthes and mixing with the literary avant-garde. Her interest in the ideas of Barthes and Lacan is synthesized in her structuralist interpretation of Lacan's claim that the unconscious is organized like a language. She draws on Lacan's distinction between the pre-Oedipal 'imaginary' and the post-Oedipal 'symbolic' stages in the development of a child's awareness. The imaginary is the period of transition from the child's not being able to distinguish where he ends and his mother begins, to the realization that he is an object in the world among others. This shift in perception is brought about by the child recognizing a divide between the openness or incompleteness of his subjectivity and the outlined wholeness of his image in a mirror (the 'mirror stage'). However, the imaginary is not something which is over and done with in a matter of months. Instead, it remains with the individual throughout adulthood as the principle of wanting to identify oneself with an image. Because it is prior to the symbolic, the imaginary represents a domain of potential meaning that is prior to any knowledge of linguistic division and gender specificity. It is the manner in which the imaginary breaks through and disrupts the symbolic which interests Kristeva.

Kristeva does not practise a form of *écriture feminine*, as Irigaray and Cixous do. The idea that there is a category of writing peculiar to the feminine, Kristeva thinks, reaffirms the binary division between the masculine and the feminine and, as such, only serves to reinforce patriarchy's commitment to essentialist, categorial thought. Instead, she offers a way of glimpsing an order of signification that is unconscious and therefore anterior to patriarchy by examining Lacan's Oedipal theory of meaning through the lens of structuralist linguistics. Kristeva adopts the term 'semiotic' to refer to the prelinguistic, generative aspect of the imaginary, and directs our attention to the occasions in writing when meaning or a particular theme breaks down. These are the moments, she argues, when the binary divisions, including the division between the masculine and the feminine, are contravened. In all of this, biological differences between the sexes are not denied. Rather, it is the values and associations which are used to make sense of the distinction – 'What is a man? What is a woman?' – and the larger network of concepts and beliefs to which they belong that are being challenged.

In her later work, Kristeva considers the interplay between the semiotic and the symbolic by looking at different kinds of personal and aesthetic experience. *Powers of Horror* (1980) focuses on the abject: the experience of being repelled or disgusted by the thing in front of us, e.g. the smell of rotting flesh or our lips touching the skin on the surface of milk. Abjection lets us see how everyday, symbolic understanding intersects with those experiences which have been deleted from

acceptability. 'Approaching Abjection', the opening chapter of *Powers of Horror*, gives tasters of the essays on avant-garde, modernist literature which make up the greater part of the book. The texts of Dostoyevsky, Proust, Joyce, Artaud, and Céline, through their content and style, Kristeva claims, skirt 'the boundary of what is assimilable, thinkable: abject'. They show how conventional, symbolic representation can retrace 'the fragile limits of the speaking being, closest to its [semiotic] dawn'.

Comparisons can be drawn between the abject and the Kantian sublime. Both, as extreme forms of experience, overwhelm us and temporarily remove our identity, remove the distinction between subject and object. The sublime in Kant is a moment of excess which allows the imagination to become aware of its own power to organize experience, and the abject, in Kristeva's analysis, is experienced at its strongest when the subject is thrown back from its object to the 'impossibility within' which constitutes desire, the basis of the subject's relationship with all objects. Perception, as desire, gives the object (the *objet a* in Lacan's terminology)[1] to the subject but the subject, who wants to identify itself with the object, doesn't find itself there and, instead, loses itself. Repugnance, Kristeva declares, keeps the subject from floundering.

Note

1 '*Objet petit a*' denotes any specific thing which can become an object of desire. Lacan does not define the term, but a definition is possible and is given in the Glossary.

■ ■ ■

APPROACHING ABJECTION

JULIA KRISTEVA

No Beast is there without glimmer of infinity,
No eye so vile nor abject that brushes not
Against lightning from on high, now tender, now fierce.
(Victor Hugo, *La Légende des siècles*)

Neither subject nor object

There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire, which, nevertheless, does not let itself be seduced. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects. A certainty protects it from the shameful – a certainty of which it is proud holds on to it. But simultaneously, just the same, that impetus, that spasm, that leap is drawn toward an elsewhere as tempting as it is condemned. Unflaggingly, like an inescapable boomerang, a vortex of summons and repulsion places the one haunted by it literally beside himself.

When I am beset by abjection, the twisted braid of affects and thoughts I call by such a name does not have, properly speaking, a definable *object*. The abject is not an ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an ob-jest, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest of desire. What is abject is not my correlative, which, providing me with someone or

something else as support, would allow me to be more or less detached and autonomous. The abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to *I*. If the object, however, through its opposition, settles me within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning, which, as a matter of fact, makes me ceaselessly and infinitely homologous to it, what is *abject*, on the contrary, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses. A certain 'ego' that merged with its master, a superego, has flatly driven it away. It lies outside, beyond the set, and does not seem to agree to the latter's rules of the game. And yet, from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master. Without a sign (for him), it beseeches a discharge, a convulsion, a crying out. To each ego its object, to each superego its abject. It is not the white expanse or slack boredom of repression, not the translations and transformations of desire that wrench bodies, nights, and discourse; rather it is a brutish suffering that 'I' puts up with, sublime and devastated, for 'I' deposits it to the father's account [*verse au père – père-version*]: I endure it, for I imagine that such is the desire of the other. A massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A 'something' that I do not recognize as a thing. A weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me. On the edge of nonexistence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me. There, abject and abjection are my safeguards. The primers of my culture.

The improper/unclean

Loathing an item of food, a piece of filth, waste, or dung. The spasms and vomiting that protect me. The repugnance, the retching that thrusts me to the side and turns me away from defilement, sewage, and muck. The shame of compromise, of being in the middle of treachery. The fascinated start that leads me toward and separates me from them.

Food loathing is perhaps the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection. When the eyes see or the lips touch that skin on the surface of milk – harmless, thin as a sheet of cigarette paper, pitiful as a nail paring – I experience a gagging sensation and, still farther down, spasms in the stomach, the belly; and all the organs shrivel up the body, provoke tears and bile, increase heartbeat, cause forehead and hands to perspire. Along with sight-clouding dizziness, *nausea* makes me balk at that milk cream, separates me from the mother and father who proffer it. 'I' want none of that element, sign of their desire; 'I' do not want to listen, 'I' do not assimilate it, 'I' expel it. But since the food is not an 'other' for 'me,' who am only in their desire, I expel *myself*, I spit *myself* out, I abject *myself* within the same motion through which 'I' claim to establish *myself*. That detail, perhaps an insignificant one, but one that they ferret out, emphasize, evaluate, that trifle turns me inside out, guts sprawling; it is thus that they see that 'I' am in the process of becoming an other at the expense of my own death. During that course in which 'I' become, I give birth to myself amid the violence of sobs, of vomit. Mute protest of the symptom, shattering violence of a convulsion that, to be sure, is inscribed in a symbolic system, but in which, without either wanting or being able to become integrated in order to answer to it, it reacts, it abreacts. It abjects.

The corpse (or cadaver: *cadere*, to fall), that which has irremediably come a cropper, is cesspool, and death; it upsets even more violently the one who confronts it as fragile and fallacious chance. A wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay, does not *signify* death. In the presence of signified death – a flat encephalograph, for instance – I would understand, react, or accept. No, as in true theater, without makeup or masks, refuse and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the

border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as being alive, from that border. Such wastes drop so that I might live, until, from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit – *cadere*, cadaver. If dung signifies the other side of the border, the place where I am not and which permits me to be, the corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything. It is no longer I who expel, 'I' is expelled. The border has become an object. How can I be without border? That elsewhere that I imagine beyond the present, or that I hallucinate so that I might, in a present time, speak to you, conceive of you – it is now here, jetted, abjected, into 'my' world. Deprived of world, therefore, I *fall in a faint*. In that compelling, raw, insolent thing in the morgue's full sunlight, in that thing that no longer matches and therefore no longer signifies anything, I behold the breaking down of a world that has erased its borders: fainting away. The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject. It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object. Imaginary uncanniness and real threat, it beckons to us and ends up engulfing us.

It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite. The traitor, the liar, the criminal with a good conscience, the shameless rapist, the killer who claims he is a savior … Any crime, because it draws attention to the fragility of the law, is abject, but premeditated crime, cunning murder, hypocritical revenge are even more so because they heighten the display of such fragility. He who denies morality is not abject; there can be grandeur in amorality and even in crime that flaunts its disrespect for the law – rebellious, liberating, and suicidal crime. Abjection, on the other hand, is immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady: a terror that dissembles, a hatred that smiles, a passion that uses the body for barter instead of inflaming it, a debtor who sells you up, a friend who stabs you …

In the dark halls of the museum that is now what remains of Auschwitz, I see a heap of children's shoes, or something like that, something I have already seen elsewhere, under a Christmas tree, for instance, dolls I believe. The abjection of Nazi crime reaches its apex when death, which, in any case, kills me, interferes with what, in my living universe, is supposed to save me from death: childhood, science, among other things.

The abjection of self

If it be true that the abject simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject, one can understand that it is experienced at the peak of its strength when that subject, weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds the impossible within; when it finds that the impossible constitutes its very *being*, that it *is* none other than abject. The abjection of self would be the culminating form of that experience of the subject to which it is revealed that all its objects are based merely on the inaugural loss that laid the foundations of its own being. There is nothing like the abjection of self to show that all abjection is in fact recognition of the want on which any being, meaning, language, or desire is founded. One always passes too quickly over this word, 'want,' and today psychoanalysts are finally taking into account only its more or less fetishized product, the 'object of want.' But if one imagines (and imagine one must, for it is the working of imagination whose foundations are being laid here) the experience of *want* itself as logically preliminary to being and object – to the being of the object – then one understands that abjection, and even more so abjection of self, is its only signified. Its signifier, then, is none but literature. Mystical Christendom turned this abjection of self into the ultimate proof of humility before God, witness Elizabeth of Hungary who 'though a great princess, delighted in nothing so much as in abasing herself.'[1]

The question remains as to the ordeal, a secular one this time, that abjection can constitute for someone who, in what is termed knowledge of castration, turning away from perverse dodges, presents himself with his own body and ego as the most precious non-objects; they are no longer seen in their own right but forfeited, abject. The termination of analysis can lead us there, as we shall see. Such are the pangs and delights of masochism.

Essentially different from 'uncanniness,' more violent, too, abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a memory. I imagine a child who has swallowed up his parents too soon, who frightens himself on that account, 'all by himself,' and, to save himself, rejects and throws up everything that is given to him – all gifts, all objects. He has, he could have, a sense of the abject. Even before things for him *are* – hence before they are signifiable – he drives them out, dominated by drive as he is, and constitutes his own territory, edged by the abject. A sacred configuration. Fear cements his compound, conjoined to another world, thrown up, driven out, forfeited. What he has swallowed up instead of maternal love is an emptiness, or rather a maternal hatred without a word for the words of the father; that is what he tries to cleanse himself of, tirelessly. What solace does he come upon within such loathing? Perhaps a father, existing but unsettled, loving but unsteady, merely an apparition but an apparition that remains. Without him the holy brat would probably have no sense of the sacred; a blank subject, he would remain, discomfited, at the dump for non-objects that are always forfeited, from which, on the contrary, fortified by abjection, he tries to extricate himself. For he is not mad, he through whom the abject exists. Out of the daze that has petrified him before the untouchable, impossible, absent body of the mother, a daze that has cut off his impulses from their objects, that is, from their representations, out of such daze he causes, along with loathing, one word to crop up – fear. The phobic has no other object than the abject. But that word, 'fear' – a fluid haze, an elusive clamminess – no sooner has it cropped up than it shades off like a mirage and permeates all words of the language with nonexistence, with a hallucinatory, ghostly glimmer. Thus, fear having been bracketed, discourse will seem tenable only if it ceaselessly confront that otherness, a burden both repellent and repelled, a deep well of memory that is unapproachable and intimate: the abject.

Beyond the unconscious

Put another way, it means that there are lives not sustained by *desire*, as desire is always for objects. Such lives are based on *exclusion*. They are clearly distinguishable from those understood as neurotic or psychotic, articulated by *negation* and its modalities, *transgression*, *denial*, and *repudiation*. Their dynamics challenges the theory of the unconscious, seeing that the latter is dependent upon a dialectic of negativity.

The theory of the unconscious, as is well known, presupposes a repression of contents (affects and presentations) that, thereby, do not have access to consciousness but effect within the subject modifications, either of speech (parapraxes, etc.), or of the body (symptoms), or both (hallucinations, etc.). As correlative to the notion of *repression*, Freud put forward that of *denial* as a means of figuring out neurosis, that of *rejection* (*repudiation*) as a means of situating psychosis. The asymmetry of the two repressions becomes more marked owing to denial's bearing on the object whereas repudiation affects desire itself (Lacan, in perfect keeping with Freud's thought, interprets that as 'repudiation of the Name of the Father').

Yet, facing the ab-ject and more specifically phobia and the splitting of the ego (a point I shall return to), one might ask if those articulations of negativity germane to the unconscious (inherited by Freud from philosophy and psychology) have not become inoperative. The 'unconscious' contents remain here *excluded* but in strange fashion: not radically enough to allow for a secure differentiation between subject and object, and yet clearly enough for a defensive

position to be established – one that implies a refusal but also a sublimating elaboration. As if the fundamental opposition were between I and Other or, in more archaic fashion, between Inside and Outside. As if such an opposition subsumed the one between Conscious and Unconscious, elaborated on the basis of neuroses.

Owing to the ambiguous opposition I/Other, Inside/Outside – an opposition that is vigorous but previous, violent but uncertain – there are contents, 'normally' unconscious in neurotics, that become explicit if not conscious in 'borderline' patients' speeches and behavior. Such contents are often openly manifested through symbolic practices, without by the same token being integrated into the judging consciousness of those particular subjects. Since they make the conscious/unconscious distinction irrelevant, borderline subjects and their speech constitute propitious ground for a sublimating discourse ('aesthetic' or 'mystical,' etc.), rather than a scientific or rationalist one.

An exile who asks, 'Where?'

The one by whom the abject exists is thus a *deject* who places (himself), *separates* (himself), situates (himself), and therefore *strays* instead of getting his bearings, desiring, belonging, or refusing. Situationist in a sense, and not without laughter – since laughing is a way of placing or displacing abjection. Necessarily dichotomous, somewhat Manichaean, he divides, excludes, and without, properly speaking, wishing to know his abjections is not at all unaware of them. Often, moreover, he includes himself among them, thus casting within himself the scalpel that carries out his separations.

Instead of sounding himself as to his 'being,' he does so concerning his place: '*Where* am I?' instead of '*Who* am I?' For the space that engrosses the deject, the excluded, is never *one*, nor *homogeneous*, nor *totalizable*, but essentially divisible, foldable, and catastrophic. A deviser of territories, languages, works, the *deject* never stops demarcating his universe whose fluid confines – for they are constituted of a non-object, the abject – constantly question his solidity and impel him to start afresh. A tireless builder, the deject is in short a *stray*. He is on a journey, during the night, the end of which keeps receding. He has a sense of the danger, of the loss that the pseudo-object attracting him represents for him, but he cannot help taking the risk at the very moment he sets himself apart. And the more he strays, the more he is saved.

Time: forgetfulness and thunder

For it is out of such straying on excluded ground that he draws his jouissance. The abject from which he does not cease separating is for him, in short, a *land of oblivion* that is constantly remembered. Once upon blotted-out time, the abject must have been a magnetized pole of covetousness. But the ashes of oblivion now serve as a screen and reflect aversion, repugnance. The clean and proper (in the sense of incorporated and incorporable) becomes filthy, the sought-after turns into the banished, fascination into shame. Then, forgotten time crops up suddenly and condenses into a flash of lightning an operation that, if it were thought out, would involve bringing together the two opposite terms but, on account of that flash, is discharged like thunder. The time of abjection is double: a time of oblivion and thunder, of veiled infinity and the moment when revelation bursts forth.

Jouissance and affect

Jouissance, in short. For the stray considers himself as equivalent to a Third Party. He secures the latter's judgment, he acts on the strength of its power in order to condemn, he grounds

himself on its law to tear the veil of oblivion but also to set up its object as inoperative. As jettisoned. Parachuted by the Other. A ternary structure, if you wish, held in keystone position by the Other, but a 'structure' that is skewed, a topology of catastrophe. For, having provided itself with an *alter ego*, the Other no longer has a grip on the three apices of the triangle where subjective homogeneity resides; and so, it jettisons the object into an abominable real, inaccessible except through jouissance. It follows that jouissance alone causes the abject to exist as such. One does not know it, one does not desire it, one joys in it [*on en jouit*]. Violently and painfully. A passion. And, as in jouissance where the object of desire, known as object a [in Lacan's terminology], bursts with the shattered mirror where the ego gives up its image in order to contemplate itself in the Other, there is nothing either objective or objectal to the abject. It is simply a frontier, a repulsive gift that the Other, having become *alter ego*, drops so that 'I' does not disappear in it but finds, in that sublime alienation, a forfeited existence. Hence a jouissance in which the subject is swallowed up but in which the Other, in return, keeps the subject from foundering by making it repugnant. One thus understands why so many victims of the abject are its fascinated victims – if not its submissive and willing ones.

We may call it a border; abjection is above all ambiguity. Because, while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it – on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger. But also because abjection itself is a composite of judgment and affect, of condemnation and yearning, of signs and drives. Abjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be – maintaining that night in which the outline of the signified thing vanishes and where only the imponderable affect is carried out. To be sure, if I am affected by what does not yet appear to me as a thing, it is because laws, connections, and even structures of meaning govern and condition me. That order, that glance, that voice, that gesture, which enact the law for my frightened body, constitute and bring about an effect and not yet a sign. I speak to it in vain in order to exclude it from what will no longer be, for myself, a world that can be assimilated. Obviously, *I am* only *like* someone else: mimetic logic of the advent of the ego, objects, and signs. But when I *seek* (myself), *lose* (myself), or experience *jouissance* – then 'I' is *heterogeneous*. Discomfort, unease, dizziness stemming from an ambiguity that, through the violence of a revolt *against*, demarcates a space out of which signs and objects arise. Thus braided, woven, ambivalent, a heterogeneous flux marks out a territory that I can call my own because the Other, having dwelt in me as *alter ego*, points it out to me through loathing.

This means once more that the heterogeneous flow, which portions the abject and sends back abjection, already dwells in a human animal that has been highly altered. I experience abjection only if an Other has settled in place and stead of what will be 'me.' Not at all an other with whom I identify and incorporate, but an Other who precedes and possesses me, and through such possession causes me to be. A possession previous to my advent: a being-there of the symbolic that a father might or might not embody. Significance is indeed inherent in the human body.

At the limit of primal repression

If, on account of that Other, a space becomes demarcated, separating the abject from what will be a subject and its objects, it is because a repression that one might call 'primal' has been effected prior to the springing forth of the ego, of its objects and representations. The latter, in turn, as they depend on another repression, the 'secondary' one, arrive only a posteriori on an enigmatic foundation that has already been marked off; its return, in a phobic, obsessional, psychotic guise, or more generally and in more imaginary fashion in the shape of *abjection*, notifies us of the limits of the human universe.

On such limits and at the limit one could say that there is no unconscious, which is elaborated when representations and affects (whether or not tied to representations) shape a logic. Here, on the contrary, consciousness has not assumed its rights and transformed into signifiers those fluid demarcations of yet unstable territories where an 'I' that is taking shape is ceaselessly straying. We are no longer within the sphere of the unconscious but at the limit of primal repression that, nevertheless, has discovered an intrinsically corporeal and already signifying brand, symptom, and sign: repugnance, disgust, abjection. There is an effervescence of object and sign – not of desire but of intolerable significance; they tumble over into non-sense or the impossible real, but they appear even so in spite of 'myself' (which is not) as abjection.

Premises of the sign, linings of the sublime

Let us pause a while at this juncture. If the abject is already a wellspring of sign for a non-object, on the edges of primal repression, one can understand its skirting the somatic symptom on the one hand and sublimation on the other. The *symptom*: a language that gives up, a structure within the body, a non-assimilable alien, a monster, a tumor, a cancer that the listening devices of the unconscious do not hear, for its strayed subject is huddled outside the paths of desire. *Sublimation*, on the contrary, is nothing else than the possibility of naming the pre-nominal, the pre-objectal, which are in fact only a trans-nominal, a trans-objectal. In the symptom, the abject permeates me, I become abject. Through sublimation, I keep it under control. The abject is edged with the sublime. It is not the same moment on the journey, but the same subject and speech bring them into being.

For the sublime has no object either. When the starry sky, a vista of open seas or a stained glass window shedding purple beams fascinate me, there is a cluster of meaning, of colors, of words, of caresses, there are light touches, scents, sighs, cadences that arise, shroud me, carry me away, and sweep me beyond the things that I see, hear, or think. The 'sublime' object dissolves in the raptures of a bottomless memory. It is such a memory, which, from stopping point to stopping point, remembrance to remembrance, love to love, transfers that object to the refulgent point of the dazzlement in which I stray in order to be. As soon as I perceive it, as soon as I name it, the sublime triggers – it has always already triggered – a spree of perceptions and words that expands memory boundlessly. I then forget the point of departure and find myself removed to a secondary universe, set off from the one where 'I' am – delight and loss. Not at all short of but always with and through perception and words, the sublime is a *something added* that expands us, overstrains us, and causes us to be both *here*, as dejects, and *there*, as others and sparkling. A divergence, an impossible bounding. Everything missed, joy – fascination.

Before the beginning: separation

The abject might then appear as the most *fragile* (from a synchronic point of view), the most *archaic* (from a diachronic one) sublimation of an 'object' still inseparable from drives. The abject is that pseudo-object that is made up before but appears only within the gaps of secondary repression. *The abject would thus be the 'object' of primal repression.*

But what is primal repression? Let us call it the ability of the speaking being, always already haunted by the Other, to divide, reject, repeat. Without *one* division, *one* separation, *one* subject/object having been constituted (not yet, or no longer yet). Why? Perhaps because of maternal anguish, unable to be satiated within the encompassing symbolic.

The abject confronts us, on the one hand, with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of *animal*. Thus, by way of abjection, primitive societies have marked out a precise

area of their culture in order to remove it from the threatening world of animals or animalism, which were imagined as representatives of sex and murder.

The abject confronts us, on the other hand, and this time within our personal archeology, with our earliest attempts to release the hold of *maternal* entity even before ex-isting outside of her, thanks to the autonomy of language. It is a violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling. The difficulty a mother has in acknowledging (or being acknowledged by) the symbolic realm – in other words, the problem she has with the phallus that her father or her husband stands for – is not such as to help the future subject leave the natural mansion. The child can serve its mother as token of her own authentication; there is, however, hardly any reason for her to serve as go-between for it to become autonomous and authentic in its turn. In such close combat, the symbolic light that a third party, eventually the father, can contribute helps the future subject, the more so if it happens to be endowed with a robust supply of drive energy, in pursuing a reluctant struggle against what, having been the mother, will turn into an abject. Repelling, rejecting; repelling itself, rejecting itself. Ab-jecting.

In this struggle, which fashions the human beings, the *mimesis*, by means of which he becomes homologous to another in order to become himself, is in short logically and chronologically secondary. Even before being *like*, 'I' am not but do *separate*, *reject*, *ab-ject*. Abjection, with a meaning broadened to take in subjective diachrony, *is a precondition to narcissism*. It is coexistent with it and causes it to be permanently brittle. The more or less beautiful image in which I behold or recognize myself rests upon an abjection that sunders it as soon as repression, the constant watchman, is relaxed.

The 'chora,' receptacle of narcissism

Let us enter, for a moment, into that Freudian aporia called primal repression. Curious primacy, where what is repressed cannot really be held down, and where what represses always already borrows its strength and authority from what is apparently very secondary: language. Let us therefore not speak of primacy but of the instability of the symbolic function in its most significant aspect – the prohibition placed on the maternal body (as a defense against autoeroticism and incest taboo). Here, drives hold sway and constitute a strange space that I shall name, after Plato (*Timeus*, 48–53), a *chora*, a receptacle.

For the benefit of the ego or its detriment, drives, whether life drives or death drives, serve to correlate that 'not yet' ego with an 'object' in order to establish both of them. Such a process, while dichotomous (inside/outside, ego/not ego) and repetitive, has nevertheless something centripetal about it: it aims to settle the ego as center of a solar system of objects. If, by dint of coming back towards the center, the drive's motion should eventually become centrifugal, hence fasten on the Other and come into being as sign so as to produce meaning – that is, literally speaking, exorbitant.

But from that moment on, while I recognize my image as sign and change in order to signify, another economy is instituted. The sign represses the *chora* and its eternal return. Desire alone will henceforth be witness to that 'primal' pulsation. But desire ex-patriates the *ego* toward an *other* subject and accepts the exactness of the ego only as narcissistic. Narcissism then appears as a regression to a position set back from the other, a return to a self-contemplative, conservative, self-sufficient haven. Actually, such narcissism never is the wrinkleless image of the Greek youth in a quiet fountain. The conflicts of drives muddle its bed, cloud its water, and bring forth everything that, by not becoming integrated with a given system of signs, is abjection for it.

Abjection is therefore a kind of *narcissistic crisis*: it is witness to the ephemeral aspect of the state called 'narcissism' with reproachful jealousy, heaven knows why; what is more, abjection gives narcissism (the thing and the concept) its classification as 'seeming.'

Nevertheless, it is enough that a prohibition, which can be a superego, block the desire craving an other – or that this other, as its role demands, not fulfill it – for desire and its signifiers to turn back toward the 'same,' thus clouding the waters of Narcissus. It is precisely at the moment of narcissistic perturbation (all things considered, the permanent state of the speaking being, if he would only hear himself speak) that secondary repression, with its reserve of symbolic means, attempts to transfer to its own account, which has thus been overdrawn, the resources of primal repression. The archaic economy is brought into full light of day, signified, verbalized. Its strategies (rejecting, separating, repeating/abjecting) hence find a symbolic existence, and the very logic of the symbolic – arguments, demonstrations, proofs, etc. – must conform to it. It is then that the object ceases to be circumscribed, reasoned with, thrust aside: it appears as abject.

Two seemingly contradictory causes bring about the narcissistic crisis that provides, along with its truth, a view of the abject. *Too much strictness on the part of the Other*, confused with the One and the Law. The *lapse of the Other*, which shows through the breakdown of objects of desire. In both instances, the abject appears in order to uphold 'I' within the Other. The abject is the violence of mourning for an 'object' that has always already been lost. The abject shatters the wall of repression and its judgments. It takes the ego back to its source on the abominable limits from which, in order to be, the ego has broken away – it assigns it a source in the non-ego, drive, and death. Abjection is a resurrection that has gone through death (of the ego). It is an alchemy that transforms death drive into a start of life, of new signifi[c]ance.

Perverse or artistic

The abject is related to perversion. The sense of abjection that I experience is anchored in the superego. The abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them. It kills in the name of life – a progressive despot; it lives at the behest of death – an operator in genetic experimentations; it curbs the other's suffering for its own profit – a cynic (and a psychoanalyst); it establishes narcissistic power while pretending to reveal the abyss – an artist who practices his art as a 'business.' Corruption is its most common, most obvious appearance. That is the socialized appearance of the abject.

An unshakable adherence to Prohibition and Law is necessary if that perverse interspace of abjection is to be hemmed in and thrust aside. Religion, Morality, Law. Obviously always arbitrary, more or less; unfailingly oppressive, rather more than less; laboriously prevailing, more and more so.

Contemporary literature does not take their place. Rather, it seems to be written out of the untenable aspects of perverse or superego positions. It acknowledges the impossibility of Religion, Morality, and Law – their power play, their necessary and absurd seeming. Like perversion, it takes advantage of them, gets round them, and makes sport of them. Nevertheless, it maintains a distance where the abject is concerned. The writer, fascinated by the abject, imagines its logic, projects himself into it, introjects it, and as a consequence perverts language – style and content. But on the other hand, as the sense of abjection is both the abject's judge and accomplice, this is also true of the literature that confronts it. One might thus say that with such a literature there takes place a crossing over of the dichotomous categories of Pure and Impure, Prohibition and Sin, Morality and Immorality.

For the subject firmly settled in its superego, a writing of this sort is necessarily implicated in the interspace that characterizes perversion; and for that reason, it gives rises in turn to abjection. And yet, such texts call for a softening of the superego. Writing them implies an ability to imagine the abject, that is, to see oneself in its place and to thrust it aside only by means of the

displacements of verbal play. It is only after his death, eventually, that the writer of abjection will escape his condition of waste, reject, abject. Then, he will either sink into oblivion or attain the rank of incommensurate ideal. Death would thus be the chief curator of our imaginary museum; it would protect us in the last resort from the abjection that contemporary literature claims to expend while uttering it. Such a protection, which gives its quietus to abjection, but also perhaps to the bothersome, incandescent stake of the literary phenomenon itself, which, raised to the status of the sacred, is severed from its specificity. Death thus keeps house in our contemporary universe. By purifying (us from) literature, it establishes our secular religion.

As abjection – so the sacred

Abjection accompanies all religious structurings and reappears, to be worked out in a new guise, at the time of their collapse. Several structurations of abjection should be distinguished, each one determining a specific form of the sacred.

Abjection appears as a rite of defilement and pollution in the paganism that accompanies societies with a dominant or surviving matrilinear character. It takes on the form of the *exclusion* of a substance (nutritive or linked to sexuality), the execution of which coincides with the sacred since it sets it up.

Abjection persists as *exclusion* or taboo (dietary or other) in monotheistic religions, Judaism in particular, but drifts over to more 'secondary' forms such as *transgression* (of the Law) within the same monotheistic economy. It finally encounters, with Christian sin, a dialectic elaboration, as it becomes integrated in the Christian Word as a threatening otherness – but always nameable, always totalizable.

The various means of *purifying* the abject – the various catharses – make up the history of religions, and end up with that catharsis *par excellence* called art, both on the far and near side of religion. Seen from that standpoint, the artistic experience, which is rooted in the abject it utters and by the same token purifies, appears as the essential component of religiosity. That is perhaps why it is destined to survive the collapse of the historical forms of religions.

Outside of the sacred, the abject is written

In the contemporary practice of the West and owing to the crisis in Christianity, abjection elicits more archaic resonances that are culturally prior to sin; through them it again assumes its biblical status, and beyond it that of defilement in primitive societies. In a world in which the Other has collapsed, the aesthetic task – a descent into the foundations of the symbolic construct – amounts to retracing the fragile limits of the speaking being, closest to its dawn, to the bottomless 'primacy' constituted by primal repression. Through that experience, which is nevertheless managed by the Other, 'subject' and 'object' push each other away, confront each other, collapse, and start again – inseparable, contaminated, condemned, at the boundary of what is assimilable, thinkable: abject. Great modern literature unfolds over that terrain: Dostoyevsky, Lautréamont, Proust, Artaud, Kafka, Céline.

Dostoyevsky

The abject is, for Dostoyevsky, the 'object' of *The Possessed*: it is the aim and motive of an existence whose meaning is lost in absolute degradation because it absolutely rejected the moral *limit* (a social, religious, familial, and individual one) as absolute – God. Abjection then wavers between the *fading away* of all meaning and all humanity, burnt as by the flames of a conflagration, and

the *ecstasy* of an ego that, having lost its Other and its objects, reaches, at the precise moment of this suicide, the height of harmony with the promised land. Equally abject are Verkhovensky and Kirilov, murder and suicide.

> A big fire at night always produces an exciting and exhilarating effect; this explains the attraction of fireworks; but in the case of fireworks, the graceful and regular shape of the flames and the complete immunity from danger produce a light and playful effect comparable to the effect of a glass of champagne. A real fire is quite another matter: there the horror and a certain sense of personal danger, combined with the well-known exhilarating effect of a fire at night, produce in the spectator (not, of course, in one whose house has burnt down) a certain shock to the brain and, as it were, a challenge to his own destructive instincts, which, alas, lie buried in the soul of even the meekest and most domesticated official of the lowest grade. This grim sensation is almost always delightful. 'I really don't know if it is possible to watch a fire without some enjoyment.'[2]

> There are seconds – they come five or six at a time – when you suddenly feel the presence of eternal harmony in all its fullness. It is nothing earthly. I don't mean that it is heavenly, but a man in his earthly semblance can't endure it. He has to undergo a physical change or die. This feeling is clear and unmistakable. It is as though you suddenly apprehended all nature and suddenly said: 'Yes, it is true – it is good.' … What is so terrifying about it is that it is so terribly clear and such gladness. If it went on for more than five seconds, the soul could not endure it and must perish. In those five seconds I live through a lifetime, and I am ready to give my life for them, for it's worth it. To be able to endure it for ten seconds, you would have to undergo a physical change. I think man ought to stop begetting children. What do you want children for, what do you want mental development, if your goal has been attained? It is said in the gospel that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are the angels of God in heaven. It's a hint. Is your wife giving birth to a baby?[3]

Verkhovensky is abject because of his clammy, cunning appeal to ideals that no longer exist, from the moment when Prohibition (call it God) is lacking. Stavrogin is perhaps less so, for his immoralism admits of laughter and refusal, something artistic, a cynical and gratuitous expenditure that obviously becomes capitalized for the benefit of private narcissism but does not serve an arbitrary, exterminating power. It is possible to be cynical without being irremediably abject; abjection, on the other hand, is always brought about by that which attempts to get along with trampled-down law.

> He's got everything perfect in his note-book, Verkhovensky went on. Spying. Every member of the society spies on the others, and he is obliged to inform against them. Everyone belongs to all the others, and all belong to everyone. All are slaves and equals in slavery. In extreme cases slander and murder, but, above all, equality. To begin with, the level of education, science, and accomplishment is lowered. A high level of scientific thought and accomplishment is open only to men of the highest abilities! Men of the highest ability have always seized the power and become autocrats. Such men cannot help being autocrats, and they've always done more harm than good; they are either banished or executed. A Cicero will have his tongue cut out, Copernicus will have his eyes gouged out, a Shakespeare will be stoned – there you have Shigalyov's doctrine! Slaves must be equal: without despotism there never has been any freedom or equality, but in a herd there is bound to be equality – there's the Shigalyov doctrine for you! Ha, ha, ha! You think it strange? I am for the Shigalyov doctrine![4]

Dostoyevsky has X-rayed sexual, moral, and religious abjection, displaying it as collapse of paternal laws. Is not the world of *The Possessed* a world of fathers, who are either repudiated,

bogus, or dead, where matriarchs lusting for power hold sway – ferocious fetishes but nonetheless phantomlike? And by symbolizing the abject, through a masterful delivery of the jouissance produced by uttering it, Dostoyevsky delivered himself of that ruthless maternal burden.

But it is with Proust that we find the most immediately erotic, sexual, and desiring mainspring of abjection; and it is with Joyce that we shall discover that the feminine body, the maternal body, in its most un-signifiable, un-symbolizable aspect, shores up, in the individual, the fantasy of the loss in which he is engulfed or becomes inebriated, for want of the ability to name an object of desire.

Proust

Abjection, recognized as inherent in the mellow and impossible alteration of the ego, hence recognized as welded to narcissism, has, in Proust, something domesticated about it; without belonging to the realm of 'one's own clean and proper' or of the 'self evident,' it constitutes a scandal of which one has to acknowledge if not the banality at least the secrets of a telltale snob. Abjection, with Proust, is fashionable, if not social; it is the foul lining of society. That may be why he furnishes the only modern example, certified by dictionaries, of the use of the word 'abject' with the weak meaning it has (in French) at the end of the eighteenth century:

> In those regions that were almost slums, what a modest existence, abject, if you please, but delightful, nourished by tranquillity and happiness, he would have consented to lead indefinitely.[5]

Proust writes that if the object of desire is real it can only rest upon the abject, which is impossible to fulfill. The object of love then becomes unmentionable, a double of the subject, similar to it, but improper, because inseparable from an impossible identity. Loving desire is thus felt as an inner fold within that impossible identity, as an accident of narcissism, ob-ject, painful alteration, delightfully and dramatically condemned to find the other in the same sex only. As if one acceded to the truth, to the abject truth of sexuality, only through homosexuality – Sodom and Gomorrah, the *Cities of the Plain*.

> I had not even cause to regret my not having arrived in the shop until several minutes had elapsed. For from what I heard first at Jupien's shop, which was only a series of inarticulate sounds, I imagine that few words had been exchanged. It is true that these sounds were so violent that, if one set had not always been taken up an octave higher by a parallel plaint, I might have thought that one person was strangling another within a few feet of me, and that subsequently the murderer and his resuscitated victim were taking a bath to wash away the traces of the crime. I concluded from this later on that there is another thing as vociferous as pain, namely pleasure, especially when there is added to it – failing the fear of an eventual parturition, which could not be present in this case, despite the hardly convincing example in the *Golden Legend* – an immediate afterthought of cleanliness.[6]

Compared to this one, the orgy in Sade, meshing with a gigantic philosophy, be it that of the boudoir, had nothing abject about it. Methodical, rhetorical, and, from that point of view, regular, it broadens Meaning, Body, and Universe but is not at all exorbitant: everything is nameable for it, the whole is nameable. Sade's scene integrates: it allows for no other, no unthinkable, nothing heterogeneous. Rational and optimistic, it does not exclude. That means that it does not recognize a sacred, and in that sense it is the anthropological and rhetorical acme of atheism. Proustian writing, to the contrary, never gives up a judging prerogative, perhaps a biblical one, which splits, banishes, shares out, or

condemns; and it is in relation to it, with it and against it, that the web of Proust's sentence, memory, sexuality, and morality is elaborated – infinitely spinning together differences (sexes, classes, races) into a homogeneity that consists only in signs, a fragile net stretched out over an abyss of incompatibilities, rejections, and abjections. Desire and signs, with Proust, weave the infinite cloth that does not hide but causes the subdued foulness to appear. As lapse, discomfort, shame, or blunder. As permanent threat, in short, to the homogenizing rhetoric that the writer composes against and with the abject.

Joyce

How dazzling, unending, eternal – and so weak, so insignificant, so sickly – is the rhetoric of Joycean language. Far from preserving us from the abject, Joyce causes it to break out in what he sees as prototype of literary utterance: Molly's monologue. If that monologue spreads out the abject, it is not because there is a woman speaking. But because, *from afar*, the writer approaches the hysterical body so that it might speak, so that he might speak, using it as springboard, of what eludes speech and turns out to be the hand to hand struggle of one woman with another, her mother of course, the absolute because primeval seat of the impossible – of the excluded, the outside-of-meaning, the abject. Atopia.

> the woman hides it not to give all the trouble they do yes he came somewhere Im sure by his appetite anyway love its not or hed be off his feed thinking of her so either it was one of those night women if it was down there he was really and the hotel story he made up a pack of lies to hide it planning it Hynes kept me who did I meet ah yes I met do you remember Menton and who else who let me see that big babbyface I saw him and he not long married flirting with a young girl at Pooles Myriorama and turned my back on him when he slinked out looking quite conscious what harm but he had the impudence to make up to me one time well done to him mouth almighty and his boiled eyes of all the big stupoes I ever met and thats called a solicitor only for I hate having a long wrangle in bed or else if its not that its some little bitch or other he got in with somewhere or picked up on the sly if they only knew him as well as I do yes because the day before yesterday he was scribbling something a letter when I came into the front room for the matches to show him Dignam's death.[7]

The abject here does not reside in the thematic of masculine sexuality as Molly might see it. Not even in the fascinated horror that the other women, sketched out in back of the men, imbue the speaker with. The abject lies, beyond the themes, and for Joyce generally, in the way one speaks; it is verbal communication, it is the Word that discloses the abject. But at the same time, the Word alone purifies from the abject, and that is what Joyce seems to say when he gives back to the masterly rhetoric that his *Work in progress* constitutes full powers against abjection. A single catharsis: the rhetoric of the pure signifier, of music in letters – *Finnegans Wake*.

Céline's journey, to the end of his night, will also encounter rhythm and music as being the only way out, the ultimate sublimation of the unsignifiable. Contrary to Joyce, however, Céline will not find salvation in it. Again carrying out a rejection, without redemption, himself forfeited, Céline will become, body and tongue, the apogee of that moral, political, and stylistic revulsion that brands our time. A time that seems to have, for a century now, gone into unending labor pains. The enchantment will have to wait for some other time, always and forever.

Borges

According to Borges the 'object' of literature is in any case vertiginous and hallucinatory. It is the Aleph, which appears, in its transfinite truth, at the time of a descent, worthy of Mallarmé's

Igitur, into the cellar of the native house, condemned to destruction – by definition. A literature that dares to relate the dizzying pangs of such a descent is no more than mediocre mockery of an archaic memory that language lays out as much as it betrays it. The Aleph is exorbitant to the extent that, within the narrative, nothing could tap its power other than the narration of *infamy*. That is, of rampancy, boundlessness, the unthinkable, the untenable, the unsymbolizable. But what is it? Unless it be the untiring repetition of a drive, which, propelled by an initial loss, does not cease wandering, unsated, deceived, warped, until it finds its only stable object – death. Handling that repetition, staging it, cultivating it until it releases, beyond its eternal return, its sublime destiny of being a struggle with death – is it not that which characterizes writing? And yet, dealing with death in that manner, making sport of it, is that not infamy itself? The literary narrative that utters the workings of repetition must necessarily become, beyond fantastic tales, detective stories, and murder mysteries, a narrative of the infamous (*A Universal History of Infamy*). And the writer cannot but recognize himself, derisive and forfeited, in that abject character, Lazarus Morell, the frightful redeemer, who raises his slaves from the dead only to have them die more fully, but not until they have been circulated – and have brought in a return – like currency. Does that mean that literary objects, our fictional objects, like the slaves of Lazarus Morell, are merely ephemeral resurrections of that elusive Aleph? Does this Aleph, this impossible 'object,' this impossible imagination, sustain the work of writing, even though the latter is merely a temporary halt in the Borgesian race toward death, which is contained in the chasm of the maternal cave?

> The stealing of horses in one state and selling them in another were barely more than a digression in Morell's criminal career, but they foreshadowed the method that now assures him his rightful place in a Universal History of Infamy. This method is unique not only for the popular circumstances that distinguished it but also for the sordidness it required, for its deadly manipulation of hope, and for its step by step development, so like the hideous unfolding of a nightmare …
>
> Flashing rings on their fingers to inspire respect, they traveled up and down the vast plantations of the South. They would pick out a wretched black and offer him freedom. They would tell him that if he ran away from his master and allowed them to sell him, he would receive a portion of the money paid for him, and they would then help him escape again, this second time sending him to a free state. Money and freedom, the jingle of silver dollars together with his liberty – what greater temptation could they offer him? The slave became emboldened for his first escape.
>
> The river provided the natural route. A canoe; the hold of a steamboat; a scow; a great raft as big as the sky, with a cabin at the point or three or four wigwams – the means mattered little, what counted was feeling the movement and the safety of the unceasing river. The black would be sold on some other plantation, then run away again to the canebrakes or the morasses. There his terrible benefactors (about whom he now began to have serious misgivings) cited obscure expenses and told him they had to sell him one final time. On his return, they said, they would give him his part of both sales and his freedom. The man let himself be sold, worked for a while, and on his final escape defied the hounds and the whip. He then made his way back bloodied, sweaty, desperate, and sleepy …
>
> The runaway expected his freedom. Lazarus Morell's shadowy mulattoes would give out an order among themselves that was sometimes barely more than a nod of the head, and the slave would be freed from sight, hearing, touch, day, infamy, time, his benefactors, pity, the air, the hound packs, the world, hope, sweat, and himself. A bullet, a knife, or a blow, and the Mississippi turtles and catfish would receive the last evidence.[8]

Just imagine that imaginary machine transformed into a social institution – and what you get is the infamy of fascism.

Artaud

An 'I' overcome by the corpse – such is often the abject in Artaud's text. For it is death that most violently represents the strange state in which a non-subject, a stray, having lost its non-objects, imagines nothingness through the ordeal of abjection. The death that 'I' am provokes horror, there is a choking sensation that does not separate inside from outside but draws them the one into the other, indefinitely. Artaud is the inescapable witness of that torture – of that truth.

> The dead little girl says, I am the one who guffaws in horror inside the lungs of the live one. Get me out of there at once.[9]
>
> Once dead, however, my corpse was thrown out on the dunghill, and I remember having been macerated I don't know how many days or how many hours while waiting to awaken. For I did not know at first that I was dead: I had to make up my mind to understand that before I could succeed in raising myself. A few friends, then, who had completely forsaken me at first, decided to come and embalm my corpse and were joylessly surprised at seeing me again, alive.[10]
>
> I have no business going to bed with you, things, for I stink more than you do, god, and going to bed does not mean getting soiled but, to the contrary, clearing myself, from you.[11]

At that level of downfall in subject and object, the abject is the equivalent of death. And writing, which allows one to recover, is equal to a resurrection. The writer, then, finds himself marked out for identification with Christ, if only in order for him, too, to be rejected, ab-jected:

> For, as ball-breaking as this may seem, I am that Artaud crucified on Golgotha, not as christ but as Artaud, in other words as complete atheist. I am that body persecuted by erotic golosity, the obscene sexual erotic golosity of mankind, for which pain is a humus, the liquid from a fertile mucus, a serum worth sipping by one who has never on his own gained by being a man while knowing that he was becoming one.[12]

These different literary texts name types of abjects that are answerable to, this goes without saying, different psychic structures. The types of articulation (narrative and syntactic structures, prosodic processes, etc. in the different texts) also vary. Thus the abject, depending on the writer, turns out to be named differently when it is not merely suggested by linguistic modifications that are always somewhat elliptic. In the final part of this essay I shall examine in detail a specific articulation of the abject – that of Céline. Let me just say at this point, as an introduction, that contemporary literature, in its multiple variants, and when it is written as the language, possible at last, of that impossible constituted either by a-subjectivity or by non-objectivity, propounds, as a matter of fact, a sublimation of abjection. Thus it becomes a substitute for the role formerly played by the sacred, at the limits of social and subjective identity. But we are dealing here with a sublimation without consecration. Forfeited.

Catharsis and analysis

That *abjection*, which modernity has learned to repress, dodge, or fake, appears fundamental once the analytic point of view is assumed. Lacan says so when he links that word to the *saintliness* of the analyst, a linkage in which the only aspect of humor that remains is blackness.[13]

One must keep open the wound where he or she who enters into the analytic adventure is located – a wound that the professional establishment, along with the cynicism of the times and of institutions, will soon manage to close up. There is nothing initiatory in that rite, if one

understands by 'initiation' the accession to a purity that the posture of *death* guaranteed (as in Plato's *Phaedo*) or the unadulterated treasure of the 'pure signifier' (as is the gold of truth in *The Republic*, or the pure separatism of the statesman in the *Statesman*). It is rather a heterogeneous, corporeal, and verbal ordeal of fundamental incompleteness: a 'gaping,' 'less One.' For the unstabilized subject who comes out of that – like a crucified person opening up the stigmata of its desiring body to a speech that structures only on condition that it let go – any signifying or human phenomenon, insofar as it is, appears in its being as abjection. For what impossible *catharsis*? Freud, early in his career, used the same word to refer to a therapeutics, the rigor of which was to come out later.

With Plato and Aristotle

The analyst is thus and forever sent back to the question that already haunted Plato when he wanted to take over where Apollonian or Dionysiac religion left off.[14] Purification is something only the Logos is capable of. But is that to be done in the manner of the *Phaedo*, stoically separating oneself from a body whose substance and passions are sources of impurity? Or rather, as in the *Sophist*, after having sorted out the worst from the best; or after the fashion of the *Philebus* by leaving the doors wide open to impurity, provided the eyes of the mind remain focused on truth? In such a case, pleasure, having become pure and true through the harmony of color and form as in the case of accurate and beautiful geometric form, has nothing in common, as the philosopher says, with 'the pleasures of scratching' (*Philebus* 51).

Catharsis seems to be a concern that is intrinsic to philosophy, insofar as the latter is an ethics and unable to forget Plato. Even if the *mixture* seems inevitable towards the end of the Platonic course, it is the mind alone, as harmonious wisdom, that insures purity: catharsis has been transformed, where transcendental idealism is concerned, into philosophy. Of the cathartic incantation peculiar to mysteries, Plato has kept only, as we all know, the very uncertain role of poets whose frenzy would be useful to the state only after having been evaluated, sorted out, and purified in its turn by wise men.

Aristotelian catharsis is closer to sacred incantation. It is the one that has bequeathed its name to the common, esthetic concept of catharsis. Through the mimesis of passions – ranging from enthusiasm to suffering – in 'language with pleasurable accessories,' the most important of which being *rhythm* and *song* (see the *Poetics*), the soul reaches *orgy* and *purity* at the same time. What is involved is a purification of body and soul by means of a heterogeneous and complex circuit, going from 'bile' to 'fire,' from 'manly warmth' to the 'enthusiasm' of the 'mind.' Rhythm and song hence arouse the impure, the other of mind, the passionate-corporeal-sexual-virile, but they harmonize it, arrange it differently than the wise man's knowledge does. They thus soothe frenzied outbursts (Plato, in the *Laws*, allowed such use of rhythm and meter only to the mother rocking her child), by contributing an *external* rule, a poetic one, which fills the gap, inherited from Plato, between body and soul. To Platonic *death*, which owned, so to speak, the state of purity, Aristotle opposed the act of *poetic purification* – in itself an impure process that protects from the abject only by dint of being immersed in it. The abject, mimed through sound and meaning, is *repeated*. Getting rid of it is out of the question – the final Platonic lesson has been understood, one does not get rid of the impure; one can, however, bring it into being a second time, and differently from the original impurity. It is a repetition through rhythm and song, therefore through what is not yet, or no longer is 'meaning,' but arranges, defers, differentiates and organizes, harmonizes pathos, bile, warmth, and enthusiasm. Benveniste translates 'rhythm' by 'trace' and 'concatenation' [*enchaînement*]. Prometheus is 'rhythmical,' and we call him 'bound' [*enchaîné*]. An attachment on the near and far side of language. Aristotle seems to say that there is a discourse of sex and that is

not the discourse of knowledge – it is the only possible catharsis. That discourse is audible, and through the speech that it mimics it repeats on another register what the latter does not say.

Philosophical sadness and the spoken disaster of the analyst

Poetic catharsis, which for more than two thousand years behaved as an underage sister of philosophy, face to face and incompatible with it, takes us away from purity, hence from Kantian ethics, which has long governed modern codes and remains more faithful to a certain Platonic stoicism. By means of the 'universalizing of maxims,' as is well known, the Kant of the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Ethics* or of the *Metaphysical Principles of Virtue* advocated an 'ethical gymnastics' in order to give us, by means of consciousness, control over our defilements and, through that very consciousness, making us free and joyous.

More skeptical and, from a certain point of view, more Aristotelian, Hegel, on the contrary, rejects a 'calculation' that claims to eliminate defilement, for the latter seems *fundamental* to him. Probably echoing the Greek polis, he conceives of no other ethics than that of the *act*. Also distrustful, however, of those fine aestheticizing souls who find purity in the elaboration of empty forms, he obviously does not hold to the mimetic and orgiastic catharsis of Aristotle. It is in the *historical* act that Hegel sees fundamental impurity being expended; as a matter of fact, the latter is a sexual impurity whose historical achievement consists in marriage. But – and this is where transcendental idealism, too, sadly comes to an end – here it is that desire (*Lust*), thus normalized in order to escape abject concupiscence (*Begierde*), sinks into a banality that is sadness and silence. How come? Hegel does not condemn impurity because it is exterior to ideal consciousness; more profoundly – but also more craftily – he thinks that it can and should get rid of itself through the historico-social act. If he thereby differs from Kant, he nevertheless shares his condemnation of (sexual) impurity. He agrees with his aim to keep consciousness apart from defilement, which, nevertheless, dialectically constitutes it. Reabsorbed into the trajectory of the Idea, what can defilement become if not the negative side of consciousness – that is, lack of communication and speech? In other words, defilement as reabsorbed in marriage becomes sadness. In so doing, it has not strayed too far from its logic, according to which it is a border of discourse – a silence.[15]

It is obvious that the analyst, from the abyss of his silence, brushes against the ghost of the sadness Hegel saw in sexual normalization. Such sadness is the more obvious to him as his ethics is rigorous – founded, as it must be in the West, on the remains of transcendental idealism. But one can also argue that the Freudian stance, which is dualistic and dissolving, unsettles those foundations. In that sense, it causes the sad, analytic silence to hover above a strange, foreign discourse, which, strictly speaking, shatters verbal communication (made up of a knowledge and a truth that are nevertheless heard) by means of a device that mimics terror, enthusiasm, or orgy, and is more closely related to rhythm and song than it is to the World. There is mimesis (some say identification) in the analytic passage through castration. And yet it is necessary that the analyst's interpretative speech (and not only his literary or theoretical bilingualism) be affected by it in order to be analytical. As counterpoise to a purity that found its bearings in disillusioned sadness, it is the 'poetic' unsettlement of analytic utterance that testifies to its closeness to, cohabitation with, and 'knowledge' of abjection.

I am thinking, in short, of the completely mimetic *identification* (transference and countertransference) of the analyst with respect to analysands. That identification allows for securing in their place what, when parcelled out, makes them suffering and barren. It allows one to regress back to the affects that can be heard in the breaks in discourse, to provide rhythm, too, to concatenate (is that what 'to become conscious' means?) the gaps of a speech saddened

because it turned its back on its abject meaning. If there is analytic jouissance it is there, in the thoroughly poetic mimesis that runs through the architecture of speech and extends from coenesthetic image to logical and phantasmatic articulations. Without for that matter biologizing language, and while breaking away from identification by means of interpretation, analytic speech is one that becomes 'incarnate' in the full sense of the term. On that condition only, it is 'cathartic' – meaning thereby that it is the equivalent, for the analyst as well as for the analysand, not of purification but of rebirth with and against abjection.

This preliminary survey of abjection, phenomenological on the whole, will now lead me to a more straightforward consideration of analytic theory on the one hand, of the history of religions on the other, and finally of contemporary literary experience.

Translated by Leon S. Roudiez

Notes

1 Francis de Sales, *Introduction to a Devout Life*, trans. Thomas S. Kepler, New York, World, 1952, p. 125. (Modified to conform to the French text, which reads, 'l'abjection de soy-mesme.')
2 Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Devils*, trans. David Magarshack, London, Penguin Books, 1953, p. 512.
3 Ibid., pp. 586–87.
4 Ibid., pp. 418–19.
5 Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*, trans. C.K. Scott-Moncrieff, New York, Random House, 1922, vol. 2, p. 141.
6 Proust, *Cities of the Plain*, trans. Frederick A. Blossom, New York, Random House, 1934, p. 9.
7 James Joyce, *Ulysses*, New York, Vintage Books, 1961, pp. 738–39.
8 Jorge Luis Borges, *A Universal History of Infamy*, trans. Norman Thomas Di Giovanni, New York, Dutton, 1979, pp. 23–25.
9 Antonin Artaud, 'Suppôts et supplications', in *Œuvres Complètes*, Paris, Gallimard, 1978, vol. 14, p. 14.
10 Ibid., p. 72.
11 Ibid., p. 203.
12 Ibid., p. 155.
13 Jacques Lacan, *Télévision*, Paris, Seuil, 1974, p. 28.
14 In connection with catharsis in the Greek world, see Louis Molinier, *Le Pur et l'impur dans la pensée des Grecs*, Paris, Klincksieck, 1952.
15 See A. Philonenko, 'Note sur les concepts de souillure et de pureté dans l'idéalisme allemand', *Les Etudes Philosophiques* 4 (1972), pp. 481–93.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Julia Kristeva in English

Revolution in Poetic Language (1974), trans. M. Waller, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.
About Chinese Women (1974), trans. A. Barrows, New York: Marion Boyars, 1986.
Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art (1977), trans. T.S. Gora, A. Jardine, and L.S. Roudiez, Oxford: Blackwell, 1984.
Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection (1980), trans. L.S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
Tales of Love (1983), trans. L.S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.
In the Beginning Was Love: Psychoanalysis and Faith (1985), trans. A. Goldhammer, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia (1987), trans. L.S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.
Strangers to Ourselves (1988), trans. L.S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

Nations Without Nationalism, trans. L.S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
New Maladies of the Soul (1993), trans. R. Guberman, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
Time and Sense: Proust and the Experience of Literature (1994), trans. R. Guberman, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
Possessions (1996), trans. B. Bray, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
Intimate Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis (1997), trans. J. Herman, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
The Feminine and the Sacred (with C. Clément; 1998), trans. J.M. Todd, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
Revolt, She Said (1998), New York: Semiotext(e), 2002.
Hannah Arendt (1999), trans. R. Guberman, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt (1999), trans. J. Herman, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
Melanie Klein (2000), trans. R. Guberman, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
Colette (2002), trans. J.M. Todd, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
This Incredible Need to Believe (2007), trans. B.B. Brahic, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
Hatred and Forgiveness, New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
The Kristeva Reader, ed. T. Moi, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.
The Portable Kristeva, ed. K. Oliver, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Further reading

Grosz (1985), Lechte and Margaroni (2004), McAfee (2003), and Payne (1993) provide introductions to Kristeva. Critical commentaries are offered by Chanter and Ziarek (2005), Lechte and Zournazi (2003), Oliver (1983), Smith (1998), and Zournazi (1998).

The relationship between semiotics, intertextuality, and psychoanalysis in her thought is examined by Barzilai (1991), Belau (2005), Doane and Hodges (1992), Frow (1990), Gambaudo (2007), Gosetti (1999), Irwin (2004), and Nikolchina (2004), with writing and the body discussed by Butler (1989), Jones (1981), Nunn (1996), and Ziarek (1992).

For explorations of Kristeva's position with regard to feminism, deconstruction, and philosophy, see McAfee (2000), Poovey (1988), and Richman (1980).

Her ethical and political commitments are considered by Jardine (1986), Jones (1984), Kuykendall (1989), and Oliver (1993). Kristeva's aesthetic and literary theory is assessed by Becker-Leckrone (2005), Bedient (1990), Bové (2006), Burniston and Weedon (1977), Conley (1977), Ebke (2006), Felski (1990), Godard (1985), Goodnow (2009), Howard (1988), Lechte (1990), and Miller (2008), with Caputi (1993), Davis (1995), Fletcher and Benjamin (1990), Gordon (1988), and Harrington (1998) focusing on the abject.

S. Barzilai, 'Borders of language: Kristeva's critique of Lacan', *Papers of the Modern Language Association*, 1991, vol. 106, pp. 294–305.
M. Becker-Leckrone, *Julia Kristeva and Literary Theory*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
C. Bedient, 'Kristeva and poetry as shattered signification', *Critical Inquiry*, 1990, vol. 16, pp. 807–29.
L. Belau, 'Reading Kristeva and beyond: psychoanalysis as textual ethics', in A. Fahraeus and A. Jonsson (eds), *Textual Ethos Studies or Locating Ethics*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005.
C.M. Bové, *Language and Politics in Julia Kristeva: Literature, Art, Therapy*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.
S. Burniston and C. Weedon, 'Ideology, subjectivity and the artistic text', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, 1977, vol. 10, pp. 203–33.
J. Butler, 'The body politics of Julia Kristeva', *Hypatia*, 1989, vol. 3, pp. 104–18.
M. Caputi, 'The abject maternal: Kristeva's theoretical consistency', *Women and Language*, 1993, vol. 16, pp. 32–37.
T. Chanter and E.P. Ziarek (eds), *Revolt, Affect, Collectivity: The Unstable Boundaries of Kristeva's Polis*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005.
V.A. Conley, 'Julia Kristeva and the traversal of modern poetic space', *Enclitic*, 1977, vol. 1, pp. 65–77.
C. Davis, 'The abject: Kristeva and the Antigone', *Paroles Gelées*, 1995, vol. 13, pp. 5–23.
J. Doane and D. Hodges, *From Klein to Kristeva: Psychoanalytic Feminism and the Search for the 'Good Enough' Mother*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

T. Ebke, 'Suspension of the body, babbling the language: strategies of literary and sexual subversion in the work of Julia Kristeva and Gilles Deleuze', *Arcadia*, 2006, vol. 41, pp. 365–95.
R. Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990.
J. Fletcher and A. Benjamin (eds), *Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva*, London: Routledge, 1990.
J. Frow, 'Intertextuality and ontology', in M. Worton and J. Still (eds), *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990, pp. 45–55.
S. Gambaudo, *Kristeva, Psychoanalysis and Culture: Subjectivity in Crisis*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.
B. Godard, 'Redrawing the circle: power, poetics, language', *Canadian Journal of Politics and Social Theory*, 1985, vol. 9, pp. 165–81.
K.J. Goodnow, *Kristeva in Focus: From Theory to Film Analysis*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009.
M.M. Gordon, 'Kristeva: abject and sublime in Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*', *Literature and Psychology*, 1988, vol. 34, pp. 44–58.
J. Gosetti, 'Language and subject in Heidegger and Kristeva', *Philosophy Today*, 1999, vol. 43, pp. 76–88.
E. Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985.
T. Harrington, 'The speaking abject in Kristeva's *Powers of Horror*', *Hypatia*, 1998, vol. 12, pp. 138–58.
J. Howard, 'Feminist differings: recent surveys of feminist literary theory and criticism', *Feminist Studies*, 1988, vol. 14, pp. 167–90.
W. Irwin, 'Against intertextuality', *Philosophy and Literature*, 2004, vol. 28, pp. 227–42.
A. Jardine, 'Opaque texts and transparent contexts: the political difference of Julia Kristeva', in N. Miller (ed.), *The Poetics of Gender*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 96–116.
A.R. Jones, 'Writing the body: toward an understanding of *l'écriture feminine*', *Feminist Studies*, 1981, vol. 7, pp. 247–63.
———, 'Julia Kristeva on femininity: the limits of a semiotic politics', *Feminist Review*, 1984, vol. 18, pp. 56–73.
E.H. Kuykendall, 'Questions for Julia Kristeva's ethics of linguistics', in J. Allen and I.M. Young (eds), *The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989, pp. 180–94.
J. Lechte, 'Kristeva and Holbein, artist of melancholy', *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 1990, vol. 30, pp. 342–50.
J. Lechte and M. Margaroni, *Julia Kristeva: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2004.
J. Lechte and M. Zournazi (eds), *The Kristeva Critical Reader*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003.
N.C. McAfee, 'Resisting essence, Kristeva's process philosophy', *Philosophy Today*, 2000, vol. 44, pp. 77–83.
———, *Julia Kristeva*, London: Routledge, 2003.
E.P. Miller, 'Negativity, iconoclasm, mimesis: Kristeva and Benjamin on political art', *Idealistic Studies*, 2008, vol. 38, pp. 55–74.
M. Nikolchina, *Matricide in Language: Writing Theory in Kristeva and Woolf*, New York: Other Press, 2004.
H. Nunn, 'Written on the body: an anatomy of horror, melancholy and love', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 1996, vol. 7, pp. 16–27.
K. Oliver, *Reading Kristeva: Unraveling the Double-Bind*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.
———, *Ethics, Politics and Difference in Julia Kristeva's Writing*, New York: Routledge, 1993.
M. Payne, *Reading Theory: An Introduction to Lacan, Derrida, and Kristeva*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.
M. Poovey, 'Feminism and deconstruction', *Feminist Studies*, 1988, vol. 14, pp. 51–65.
N. Richman, 'Sex and signs: the language of French feminist criticism', *Language and Style*, 1980, vol. 13, pp. 62–80.
A.-M. Smith, *Julia Kristeva: Speaking the Unspeakable*, London: Pluto Press, 1998.
E. Ziarek, 'At the limits of discourse: heterogeneity, alterity and the maternal body in Kristeva's thought', *Hypatia*, 1992, vol. 7, pp. 91–109.
M. Zournazi, *Foreign Dialogues: Memories, Translations, Conversations*, Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998.

Chapter 23

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

INTRODUCTION

Through his prolific, mischievous writing, the Slovenian philosopher and cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek (b. 1949) brings Lacanian psychoanalysis 'to life'. He applies it to political action and theory, economic rationality, and both high and popular culture. The application of Lacan is made as part of Žižek's ambition to rehabilitate dialectical materialism (the Marxist philosophy of social progression from capitalism to communism, achieved by the overcoming of contradictions through material practice or labour), and to revive Marxist political action in the face of the perceived demotivating tendencies of relativizing, 'anything goes' postmodernism. Also at work in Žižek's project are the philosophies of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel who, according to Johnston, are 'knotted together vis-à-vis Lacan himself' to create 'the underlying skeletal structure holding together the entirety of the Žižekian theoretical edifice'.[1] The importance of this Lacanian-inspired chain of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel is the work it does to redefine subjectivity. Against the postmodern denial of the human subject, Žižek supports a return to a Cartesian conception of the subject. But this is no ego or self-sustaining content.

Postmodern political and theoretical contexts configure all things and events as systems of differences operating within their own local structures. What is lost is the possibility of an ontological difference, something which can stand out and stand back from these systems as a critical vantage point. The Cartesian cogito is this point of difference for Žižek: a subject 'emptied of all content' which is positioned in various ways as a series of ruptures, divisions, or conflicts in the philosophies of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel. For example, as considered in relation to Lacan above, self-consciousness for Hegel 'is Desire' since it is 'certain of itself only by superseding this other that presents itself to self-consciousness as an independent life'; but the act of supersession, instead of being a unifying principle, occurs as a rupture through its generation of a new otherness.[2] The rehabilitation of dialectical materialism, as Žižek sees it, occurs through the antinomies or blindspots or gaps which he finds through his Lacanian psychoanalysis of culture. These serve as moments of critical ontological difference in a climate that is otherwise caught in an oscillation between 'mechanical materialism and idealist obscurantism'.[3] *The Parallax View*, from 2006 – 'parallax' being Žižek's preferred term for 'a fundamental *antinomy* which can never be dialectically "mediated/sublated" into a higher synthesis'[4] – is the book which arguably gives this thesis its most systematic treatment.

Exploring blindspots or gaps is the theme of the essay representing Žižek in this volume: a study from 1991 of how Lacan's theory of the gaze is active within the filmic contexts of pornography, nostalgia, and montage. The structuralist heritage of Lacan's theory comes to the fore when, on several occasions, Žižek finds that it is through a 'structural necessity' that the real

cannot be represented in film. Lacan's synthesis of structuralism and Hegelian dialectic creates a psychoanalysis which theorizes subjectivity as an event – a dynamic or a series of transformations – which takes place within a framework of differences, and which is motivated by an insatiable appetite for otherness. The real can never be located within this framework of differences because it is always 'missing from its place'.[5] Not to be confused with reality, which is knowable, the real, according to Sheridan, is that which 'is lacking in the symbolic order, the ineliminable residue of all articulation, the foreclosed element, which may be approached, but never grasped: the umbilical cord of the symbolic'.[6] For Lacan, vision is a decentred opening onto the world, and an aspect of desire. This is in opposition to the Renaissance and Cartesian concept of vision as the distant, objective surveillance conducted by a centred, autonomous ego. Vision is a part of desire since it is an opening onto otherness.

Of interest to Lacan are those occasions in experience and in art which let us see the moment when objects *give themselves to vision* (*le donner-à-voir*), as illustrated, for example, by *trompe l'oeil* (deceiving the eye) paintings and, from Lacan's anecdote, a gleam of light off a sardine can floating in the sea.[7] This is the gaze as '*objet petit a*'; the gaze which becomes an object.[8] 'The gaze' (or 'the look') is a concept from Sartre's existentialism which attaches significance to the fact that, in Lacan's words, 'I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides'.[9] Žižek recounts the anecdote of the sardine can:

> Among the fishermen on the boat, there was a certain Petit-Jean who, pointing out an empty sardine can glittering in the sun, asked Lacan: '*You see the can? Do you see it? Well, it doesn't see you!*' Lacan's comment: 'If what Petit-Jean said to me, namely that the can did not see me, had any meaning, it was because in a sense, it was looking at me, all the same.' It was looking at him because, as Lacan explains, using a key notion of the Hitchcockian universe, 'I functioned somewhat like a spot in the picture.'[10]

What has to be recognized is that this 'giving itself to vision' is not a singular act of generosity but one of many which perpetuates a dependence relation between consciousness and the other; it does not satiate the appetite of the eye but, rather, creates the tension which ensures that vision cannot collapse into itself. As far as film is concerned, the 'giving itself to vision' occurs when the film is structured in such a way as to work against the conventional, Cartesian subject–object split, and locate subjectivity within the film. The 'spot in the picture' is the point when diegetic reality, reality as it is portrayed in the film, 'passes over into the real' in the Lacanian sense, meaning it is 'the mysterious detail that "sticks out", that does not "fit" into the symbolic network of reality' and, as such, 'indicates that "something is amiss"'. This coincides with the moment 'at which the observer is already included, inscribed in the observed scene – in a way, it is the point from which the picture itself looks back at us', on account of the fact that the 'oscillation between lack and surplus meaning' – the tension between recognizing that something has eluded the symbolic order and the search for meaning which results – is 'the proper dimension of subjectivity'.[11] In the essay from Žižek below, through studies of sequences from *Manhunter*, *Shane*, and several pieces of *film noir*, pornography, nostalgia, and montage in film are presented as forming 'a kind of quasi Hegelian "triad" in relation to the gaze *qua* object', that is, the gaze as *objet petit a*, as a spot.

Notes

1 A. Johnston, *Žižek's Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008, p. xiv.
2 G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 108.
3 S. Žižek, *The Parallax View*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006, p. 4.
4 Ibid.
5 J. Lechte, *Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2008, p. 252.
6 A. Sheridan, 'Translator's introduction', in J. Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, London: Routledge, 2001, p. xii.
7 J. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. A. Sheridan, London: Vintage, 1977, p. 95.
8 '*Objet petit a*' denotes any specific thing which can become an object of desire. The '*a*' stands for '*autre*' (other) and '*petit a*' (small 'a') distinguishes the particular other from the '*Autre*' or '*grand Autre*' (the capitalized Other) which denotes the Hegelian, ontological condition of otherness in general.
9 Ibid., p. 72.
10 Quoted from 'Pornography, Nostalgia, Montage', included in this volume; original emphasis.
11 S. Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991, p. 91.

■ ■ ■

PORNOGRAPHY, NOSTALGIA, MONTAGE: A TRIAD OF THE GAZE

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

The perverse short circuit

Sadist as object

Michael Mann's *Manhunter* is a movie about a police detective famous for his ability to enter intuitively, through his 'sixth sense,' the mind of perverse, sadistic murderers. His task is to detect a particularly cruel mass murderer who slaughtered a series of quiet, provincial families. The detective reruns again and again super-8 home movies shot by each of the slaughtered families in order to arrive at the *trait unaire*, the feature common to all of them that attracted the murderer and thus directed his choice. But all his efforts are in vain as long as he looks for this common feature on the level of content, i.e., in the families themselves. He finds the key to the identity of the murderer when a certain inconsistency strikes his eye. The investigation at the scene of the last crime shows that to enter the house, to break open the back door, the murderer used a kind of tool that was inappropriate, even unnecessary. The old back door had been replaced a few weeks before the crime with a new type of door. To break open the new door, another kind of tool would have been far more appropriate. So how did the murderer get this piece of wrong or, more precisely, out-of-date information? The old back door could be seen clearly in scenes from a super-8 home movie. The only thing common to all the slaughtered families is then *the home movies themselves*, i.e., the murderer had to have had access to their private movies, there is no other link connecting them. Because these movies are private, the only possible link between them is the laboratory where they were developed. A quick check confirms that all the

movies were developed by the same laboratory, and the murderer is soon identified as one of the workers in the lab. Wherein lies the theoretical interest of this denouement? The detective searches for a common feature that will enable him to get at the murderer in the content of the home movies, thus overlooking the form itself, i.e., the crucial fact that he is all the time viewing a series of home movies. The decisive turn takes place when he becomes aware that through the very screening of the home movies, *he is already identified with the murderer*, that his obsessive gaze, surveying every detail of the scenery, coincides with the gaze of the murderer. The identification is on the level of the gaze, not on the level of the content. There is something extremely unpleasant and obscene in this experience of our gaze as already the gaze of the other. Why? The Lacanian answer is that such a coincidence of gazes defines the position of the pervert. (Herein consists, according to Lacan, the difference between the 'feminine' and the 'masculine' mystic, between, let us say, Saint Theresa and Jacob Boehme. The 'feminine' mystic implies a nonphallic, 'not-all' enjoyment, whereas the 'masculine' mystic consists precisely in such an overlap of gazes by which he experiences the fact that his intuition of God is the view by means of which God looks at Himself: 'To confuse his contemplative eye with the eye with which God is looking at him must surely partake of perverse *jouissance*.')[1]

This coincidence of the subject's view with the gaze of the big Other, which defines perversion, enables us to conceptualize one of the fundamental features of the ideological functioning of 'totalitarianism': if the perversion of 'male' mysticism consists in the fact that the view by means of which the subject contemplates God is at the same time the gaze by means of which God contemplates Himself, then the perversion of Stalinist Communism consists in the fact that the view by means of which the Party looks at history coincides immediately with history's gaze upon itself. To use good old Stalinist jargon, today already half-forgotten, Communists act immediately in the name of 'objective laws of historical progress'; it is history itself, its necessity, that speaks through their mouths.

Which is why the elementary formula of Sadean perversion, as formulated by Lacan in 'Kant with Sade,' is so convenient to designate the subjective position of Stalinist Communism. According to Lacan, the Sadean subject tries to elude his constitutive split, his division, by transferring it onto his other (the victim) and by identifying himself with the object, i.e., by occupying the position of the object-instrument of the will-to-enjoy (*volonté-de-jouir*) – which is not his own will but that of the big Other, who assumes the form of the 'Supreme Evil Being.' Herein consists Lacan's break with the usual notion of 'sadism': according to the latter, the 'sadist pervert' assumes the position of an absolute subject usurping the right to enjoy, without restraint, the body of the other, reducing him/her to an object-instrument for the satisfaction of his own will. Lacan argues, however, that it is the 'sadist' himself who is in the position of the object-instrument, the executor of some radically heterogeneous will, while the split subject is precisely his other (the victim). The pervert does not pursue his activity for his own pleasure, but for the enjoyment of the Other – he finds enjoyment precisely in this instrumentalization, in working for the enjoyment of the Other.[2] It should then be clear why in Lacan, the matheme of perversion is written as the inversion of the matheme of fantasy: $a \lozenge \$$.[3] And it should also be clear why this matheme designates at the same time the subjective position of Stalinist Communist: he torments his victim (the masses, the 'ordinary' people) infinitely, but he does this as an instrument of the big Other ('the objective laws of history,' 'the necessity of historical progress') behind which it is not difficult to recognize the Sadean figure of the Supreme Evil Being. The case of Stalinism neatly exemplifies why, in perversion, the other (the victim) is split: the Stalinist Communist torments people, but he does so as their own faithful servant, in their own name, as an executor of their own will (their own 'true, objective interests').[4]

Pornography

The final irony of *Manhunter* would, then, be the following: confronted with a perverse-sadistic content, the detective is able to arrive at a solution only by taking into account the fact that his very procedure is, on a formal level, already 'perverse.' It implies a coincidence between his gaze and the gaze of the other (the murderer). And it is this overlap, this coincidence of our view with the gaze of the other, that helps us to understand pornography.

As it is ordinarily understood, *pornography* is the genre supposed to 'reveal all there is to reveal,' to hide nothing, to register 'all' and offer it to our view. It is nevertheless precisely in pornographic cinema that the 'substance of enjoyment' perceived by the view from aside is *radically lost* – why? Let us recall the antinomic relation of gaze and eye as articulated by Lacan in *Seminar XI*: the eye viewing the object is on the side of the subject, while the gaze is on the side of the object. When I look at an object, the object is always already gazing at me, and from a point at which I cannot see it:

> In the scopic field, everything is articulated between two terms that act in an antinomic way – on the side of things, there is the gaze, that is to say, things look at me, and yet I see them. This is how one should understand those words, so strongly stressed, in the Gospel, *They have eyes that they might not see*. That they might not see what? Precisely, that things are looking at them.[5]

This antinomy of gaze and view is lost in pornography – why? Because pornography is inherently *perverse*; its perverse character lies not in the obvious fact that it 'goes all the way and shows us all the dirty details'; its perversity is, rather, to be conceived in a strictly formal way. In pornography, the spectator is forced a priori to occupy a perverse position. Instead of being on the side of the viewed object, the gaze falls into ourselves, the spectators, which is why the image we see on the screen contains no spot, no sublime-mysterious point from which it gazes at us. It is only we who gaze stupidly at the image that 'reveals all.' Contrary to the commonplace according to which, in pornography, the other (the person shown on the screen) is degraded to an object of our voyeuristic pleasure, we must stress that it is the spectator himself who effectively occupies the position of the object. The real subjects are the actors on the screen trying to rouse us sexually, while we, the spectators, are reduced to a paralyzed object-gaze.[6]

Pornography thus misses, reduces the point of the object-gaze in the other. This miss has precisely the form of a missed, failed encounter. That is to say, in a 'normal,' nonpornographic film, a love scene is always built around a certain insurmountable limit; 'all cannot be shown.' At a certain point the image is blurred, the camera moves off, the scene is interrupted, we never directly see 'that' (the penetration of sexual organs, etc.). In contrast to this limit of representability defining the 'normal' love story or melodrama, pornography goes beyond, it 'shows everything.' The paradox is, however, that by trespassing the limit, it always *goes too far*, i.e., it *misses* what remains concealed in a 'normal,' nonpornographic love scene. To refer again to the phrase from Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*: if you run too fast after happiness, you may overtake it and happiness may stay behind. If we proceed too hastily 'to the point,' if we show 'the thing itself,' we necessarily lose what we were after. The effect is extremely vulgar and depressing (as can be confirmed by anyone who has watched any hard-core movies). Pornography is thus just another variation on the paradox of Achilles and the tortoise that, according to Lacan, defines the relation of the subject to the object of his desire. Naturally, Achilles can easily outdistance the tortoise and leave it behind, but the point is that he cannot come up alongside it, he cannot rejoin it. The subject is always too slow or too quick, it can never keep pace with the object of its desire. The unattainable/forbidden object approached but never reached by the 'normal' love story – the sexual act – exists only as

concealed, indicated, 'faked.' As soon as we 'show it,' its charm is dispelled, we have 'gone too far.' Instead of the sublime Thing, we are stuck with vulgar, groaning fornication.

The consequence of this is that harmony, congruence between the filmic narrative (the unfolding of the story) and the immediate display of the sexual act, is structurally impossible: if we choose one, we necessarily lose the other. In other words, if we want to have a love story that 'takes,' that moves us, we must not 'go all the way' and 'show it all' (the details of the sexual act), because as soon as we 'show it all,' the story is no longer 'taken seriously' and starts to function only as a pretext for introducing acts of copulation. We can detect this gap via a kind of 'knowledge in the real,' which determines the way actors behave in different film genres. The characters included in the diegetic reality always react as if they knew in which genre of film they were. If, for example, a door creaks in a horror film, the actor will react by turning his head anxiously toward it; if a door creaks in a family comedy, the same actor will shout at his small child not to sneak around the apartment. The same is true to an even greater extent of the 'porno' film: before we pass to the sexual activity, we need a short introduction – normally, a stupid plot serving as pretext for the actors to begin copulation (the housewife calls in a plumber, a new secretary reports to the manager, etc.). The point is that even in the manner in which they enact this introductory plot, the actors divulge that this is for them only a stupid although necessary formality that has to be gotten over with as quickly as possible so as to begin tackling the 'real thing.'[7]

The fantasy ideal of a perfect work of pornography would be precisely to preserve this impossible harmony, the balance between narration and explicit depiction of the sexual act, i.e., to avoid the necessary *vel* that condemns us to lose one of the two poles. Let us take an old-fashioned, nostalgic melodrama like *Out of Africa*, and let us assume that the film is precisely the one shown in cinemas, except for an additional ten minutes. When Robert Redford and Meryl Streep have their first love encounter, the scene – in this slightly longer version of the film – is not interrupted, the camera 'shows it all,' details of their aroused sexual organs, penetration, orgasm, etc. Then, after the act, the story goes on as usual, we return to the film we all know. The problem is that such a movie is structurally impossible. Even if it were to be shot, it simply 'would not function'; the additional ten minutes would derail us, for the rest of the movie we would be unable to regain our balance and follow the narration with the usual disavowed belief in the diegetic reality. The sexual act would function as an intrusion of the real undermining the consistency of this diegetic reality.

Nostalgia

In pornography, the gaze *qua* object falls thus onto the subject-spectator, causing an effect of depressing desublimation. Which is why, to extract the gaze-object in its pure, formal status, we have to turn to pornography's opposite pole: nostalgia. Let us take what is probably today the most notorious case of nostalgic fascination in the domain of cinema: the American *film noir* of the 1940s. What, precisely, is so fascinating about this genre? It is clear that we can no longer identify with it. The most dramatic scenes from *Casablanca*, *Murder, My Sweet*, or *Out of the Past* provoke laughter today among spectators, but nevertheless, far from posing a threat to the genre's power of fascination, this kind of distance is its very condition. That is to say, what fascinates us is precisely a certain gaze, the gaze of the 'other,' of the hypothetical, mythic spectator from the '40s who was supposedly still able to identify immediately with the universe of *film noir*. What we really see, when we watch a *film noir*, is this gaze of the other: we are fascinated by the gaze of the mythic 'naive' spectator, the one who was 'still able to take it seriously,' in other words, the one who 'believes in it' for us, in place of us. For that reason, our relation to a *film noir* is always divided, split between fascination and ironic distance: ironic distance toward its diegetic reality, fascination with the gaze.

This gaze-object appears in its purest form in a series of films in which the logic of nostalgia is brought to self-reference: *Body Heat*, *Driver*, *Shane*. As Fredric Jameson has already observed in his well-known article on postmodernism,[8] *Body Heat* reverses the usual nostalgic procedure in which the fragment of the past that serves as the object of nostalgia is extracted from its historic context, from its continuity, and inserted into a kind of mythic, eternal, timeless present. Here, in this *film noir* – a vague remake of *Double Indemnity*, which takes place in contemporary Florida – present time itself is viewed through the eyes of the *film noir* of the '40s. Instead of transposing a fragment of the past into a timeless, mythic present, we view the present itself as if it were part of the mythic past. If we do not take into consideration this 'gaze of the '40s,' *Body Heat* remains simply a contemporary film about contemporary times and, as such, totally incomprehensible. Its whole power of fascination is bestowed upon it by the fact that it looks at the present with the eyes of the mythical past. The same dialectic of the gaze is at work in Walter Hill's *Driver*; its starting point is again the *film noir* of the '40s which, as such, *does not exist*. It started to exist only when it was discovered by French critics in the '50s (it is no accident that even in English, the term used to designate this genre is French: *film noir*). What was, in America itself, a series of low-budget B-productions of little critical prestige, was miraculously transformed, through the intervention of the French gaze, into a sublime object of art, a kind of film pendant to philosophical existentialism. Directors who had in America the status of skilled craftsmen, at best, became *auteurs*, each of them staging in his films a unique tragic vision of the universe. But the crucial fact is that this French view of *film noir* exerted a considerable influence on French film production, so that in France itself, a genre homologous to the American *film noir* was established; its most distinguished example is probably Jean-Pierre Melville's *Samurai*. Hill's *Driver* is a kind of remake of *Samurai*, an attempt to transpose the French gaze back onto America itself – a paradox of America looking at itself through French eyes. Again, if we conceive *Driver* simply as an American film about America, it becomes incomprehensible: we must include the 'French gaze.'

Our last example is *Shane*, the classic western by George Stevens. As is well known, the end of the '40s witnessed the first great crisis of the western as a genre. Pure, simple westerns began to produce an effect of artificiality and mechanical routine, their formula was seemingly exhausted. Authors reacted to this crisis by overlaying westerns with elements of other genres. Thus we have *film noir* westerns (Raoul Welsh's *Pursued*, which achieves the almost impossible task of transposing into a western the dark universe of the *film noir*); musical comedy westerns (*Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*); psychological westerns (*The Gunfighter*, with Gregory Peck); historical epic westerns (the remake of *Cimarron*), etc. In the '50s, André Bazin baptized this new, 'reflected' genre the *meta-western*. The way *Shane* functions can be grasped only against the background of the 'meta-western.' *Shane* is the paradox of a western, the 'meta-' dimension of which is the *western itself*. In other words, it is a western that implies a kind of nostalgic distance toward the universe of westerns: a western that functions, so to speak, as its own myth. To explain the effect produced by *Shane*, we must again refer to the function of the gaze. That is to say, if we remain on the commonsense level, if we do not include the dimension of the gaze, a simple and understandable question arises: if the meta-dimension of this western is the western itself, what accounts for the distance between the two levels? Why does the meta-western not simply overlap with the western itself? Why do we not have a western pure and simple? The answer is that, by means of a structural necessity, *Shane* belongs in the context of the meta-western: on the level of its immediate diegetic contents, it is of course a western pure and simple, one of the purest ever made. But the very form of its historical context determines that we perceive it as meta-western, i.e., precisely because, in its diegetic contents, it is a pure western, the dimension 'beyond western' opened up by the historical context can be filled out only by the western itself. In other words, *Shane* is a pure western *at a time when pure westerns were*

no longer possible, when the western was already perceived from a certain nostalgic distance, as a lost object. Which is why it is highly indicative that the story is told from a child's perspective (the perspective of a little boy, a member of a farming family defended against violent cattle breeders by Shane, a mythic hero appearing suddenly out of nowhere). The innocent, naive gaze of the other that fascinates us in nostalgia is in the last resort always the gaze of a child.

In nostalgic, retrofilms, then, the logic of the gaze *qua* object appears as such. The real object of fascination is not the displayed scene but the gaze of the naive 'other' absorbed, enchanted by it. In *Shane*, for example, we can be fascinated by the mysterious apparition of Shane only through the medium of the 'innocent' child's gaze, never immediately. Such a logic of fascination by which the subject sees in the object (in the image it views) its own gaze, i.e., by which, in the viewed image, it 'sees itself seeing,' is defined by Lacan as the very illusion of perfect self-mirroring that characterizes the Cartesian philosophical tradition of the subject of self-reflection.[9] But what happens here with the *antinomy* between eye and gaze? That is to say, the whole point of Lacan's argument is to oppose to the self-mirroring of philosophical subjectivity the irreducible discord between the gaze *qua* object and the subject's eye. Far from being the point of self-sufficient self-mirroring, the gaze *qua* object functions like a blot that blurs the transparency of the viewed image. I can never see properly, can never include in the totality of my field of vision, the point in the other from which it gazes back at me. Like the extended blot in Holbein's *Ambassadors*, this point throws the harmony of my vision off balance.

The answer to our problem is clear: the function of the nostalgic object is precisely to *conceal* the antinomy between eye and gaze – i.e., the traumatic impact of the gaze *qua* object – by means of its power of fascination. In nostalgia, the gaze of the other is in a way domesticated, 'gentrified'; instead of the gaze erupting like a traumatic, disharmonious blot, we have the illusion of 'seeing ourselves seeing,' of seeing the gaze itself. In a way, we could say that the function of fascination is precisely to blind us to the fact that the other is already gazing at us. In Kafka's parable 'The Door of the Law,' the man from the country waiting at the entrance to the court is fascinated by the secret beyond the door he is forbidden to trespass. In the end, the power of fascination exerted by the court is dispelled. But how, exactly? Its power is lost when the door keeper tells him that this entrance was, from the very start, meant only for him. In other words, he tells the man from the country that the thing that fascinated him was, in a way, gazing back at him all along, addressing him. That is, the man's desire was from the very start 'part of the game.' The whole spectacle of the Door of the Law and the secret beyond it was staged only to capture his desire. If the power of fascination is to produce its effect, this fact must remain concealed. As soon as the subject becomes aware that the other gazes at him (that the door is meant only for him), the fascination is dispelled.

In his Bayreuth production of *Tristan und Isolde*, Jean-Pierre Ponelle introduced an extremely interesting change in Wagner's original plot, a change that precisely concerns the functioning of the gaze as object of fascination. In Wagner's libretto, the denouement simply resumes the mythic tradition. The wounded Tristan takes refuge in his castle in Cornwall and waits for Isolde to follow him. When, because of a misunderstanding concerning the color of the sail of Isolde's vessel, he becomes convinced that Isolde will not arrive, he dies in agony. Whereupon Isolde arrives together with her lawful husband, King Marke, who is willing to forgive the sinful couple. It is, however, too late; Tristan is already dead. In esctatic agony, Isolde herself dies embracing the dead Tristan. What Ponelle did was simply to stage the last act as if the end of the 'real' action were Tristan's death. All that follows – the arrival of Isolde and Marke, Isolde's death – is just Tristan's mortal delirium. In reality, Isolde has simply broken the vow to her lover and returned, repentent, to her husband. The much-celebrated end of *Tristan und Isolde*, Isolde's love-death, appears thus as what it effectively is: the *masculine* fantasy of a finally accomplished

sexual relationship by which the couple is forever united in mortal ecstasy, or, more precisely, in which the *woman* follows her man into death in an act of ecstatic self-abandonment.

But the crucial point for us is the way Ponelle staged this delirious apparition of Isolde. Because she appears to Tristan, we would expect her to stand *in front of* him and thus fascinate his gaze. In Ponelle's mise-en-scène, however, Tristan looks directly at us, the spectators in the hall, while the dazzlingly illuminated Isolde grows luxuriantly *behind* him, as that which is 'in him more than himself.' The object at which Tristan stares in fascination is thus literally *the gaze of the other* (embodied in us, the spectators), the gaze that sees Isolde, i.e., the gaze that sees not only Tristan but also his sublime other, that which is in him more than himself, the 'treasure,' *agalma*, in him. At this point, Ponelle adroitly made use of the words sung by Isolde. Far from plunging into a kind of autistic trance, she continually addresses the gaze of the other: 'Friends! Do you see, can't you see, how he [Tristan] glitters more and more?' – that which 'glitters more and more' in him being of course *herself* as the illuminated apparition behind him.

If the function of nostalgic fascination is thus to conceal, to appease the disharmonious irruption of the gaze *qua* object, how is this gaze consequently *produced*? Which cinematic procedure opens up, hollows the void of the gaze *qua* object in the continuous flow of images? Our thesis is that this void constitutes the necessary leftover of *montage*, so that pornography, nostalgia, and montage form a kind of quasi-Hegelian 'triad' in relation to the status of the gaze *qua* object.

The Hitchcockian cut

Montage

Montage is usually conceived as a way of producing from fragments of the real – pieces of film, discontinuous individual shots – an effect of 'cinematic space,' i.e., a specific cinematic reality. That is to say, it is universally acknowledged that 'cinematic space' is never a simple repetition or imitation of external, 'effective' reality, but an effect of montage. What is often overlooked, however, is the way this transformation of fragments of the real into cinematic reality produces, through a kind of structural necessity, a certain leftover, a surplus that is radically heterogeneous to cinematic reality but nonetheless implied by it, part of it.[10] That this surplus of the real is, in the last resort, precisely the gaze *qua* object, is best exemplified by the work of Hitchcock.

We have already pointed out that the fundamental constituent of the Hitchcockian universe is the so-called 'spot': the stain upon which reality revolves, passes over into the real, the mysterious detail that 'sticks out,' that does not 'fit' into the symbolic network of reality and that, as such, indicates that 'something is amiss.' The fact that this spot ultimately coincides with the threatening gaze of the other is confirmed in an almost too obvious way by the famous tennis court scene from *Strangers on a Train*, in which Guy watches the crowd watching the game. The camera first gives us a long shot of the crowd; all heads turn alternately left and right, following the path of the ball, all except one, which stares with a fixed gaze into the camera, i.e., at Guy. The camera then quickly approaches this motionless head. It is Bruno, linked to Guy by a murderous pact. Here we have in pure, distilled form the stiff, motionless gaze, sticking out like a strange body and thus disturbing the harmony of the image by introducing a threatening dimension.

The function of the famous Hitchcockian 'tracking shot' is precisely to produce a spot: in the tracking shot, the camera moves from an establishing shot to a close-up of a detail that remains a blurred spot, the true form of which is accessible only to an anamorphotic 'view from aside.' The shot slowly isolates from its surroundings the element that cannot be integrated into the symbolic reality, that must remain a strange body if the depicted reality is to retain its consistency. But what interests us here is the fact that under certain conditions, montage *does* intervene in the tracking shot, i.e., the continuous approach of the camera is interrupted by cuts.

What, more precisely, are these conditions? Briefly, the tracking shot must be interrupted when it is 'subjective,' when the camera shows us the subjective view of a person approaching the object-spot. That is to say, whenever, in a Hitchcock film, a hero, a person around whom the scene is structured, approaches an object, a thing, another person, anything that can become 'uncanny' (*unheimlich*) in the Freudian sense, Hitchcock as a rule alternates the 'objective' shot of this person in motion, his/her approach toward the uncanny Thing, with a subjective shot of what this person sees, i.e., with a subjective view of the Thing. This is, so to speak, the elementary procedure, the zero degree of Hitchcockian montage.

Let us take a few examples. When, toward the end of *Psycho*, Lilah climbs up the rise to the mysterious old house, the presumed home of 'Norman's mother,' Hitchcock alternates the objective shot of Lilah climbing with her subjective view of the old house. He does the same in *The Birds*, in the famous scene analyzed in detail by Raymond Bellour,[11] when Melanie, after crossing the bay in a small rented boat, approaches the house where Mitch's mother and sister live. Again, he alternates an objective shot of the uneasy Melanie, aware of intruding on the privacy of a home, with her subjective view of the mysteriously silent house.[12] Of innumerable other examples, let us mention merely a short, trivial scene between Marion and a car dealer in *Psycho*. Here, Hitchcock uses his montage procedure several times (when Marion approaches the car dealer; when, toward the end of the scene, a policeman approaches who has already stopped her on the highway the same morning, etc.). By means of this purely formal procedure, an entirely trivial, everyday incident is given an uneasy, threatening dimension that cannot be sufficiently explained by its diegetic contents (i.e., by the fact that Marion is buying a new car with stolen money and thus fears exposure). Hitchcockian montage elevates an everyday, trivial object into a sublime Thing. By purely formal manipulation, it succeeds in bestowing on an ordinary object the aura of anxiety and uneasiness.[13]

In Hitchcockian montage, two kinds of shots are thus permitted and two forbidden. Permitted are the objective shot of the person approaching a Thing and the subjective shot presenting the Thing as the person sees it. Forbidden are the objective shot of the Thing, of the 'uncanny' object, and – above all – the subjective shot of the approaching person from the perspective of the 'uncanny' object itself. Let us refer again to the above-mentioned scene from *Psycho* depicting Lilah approaching the house on the top of the hill. It is crucial that Hitchcock shows the threatening Thing (the house) exclusively from the point of view of Lilah. If he were to have added a 'neutral' objective shot of the house, the whole mysterious effect would have been lost. We (the spectators) would have to endure a radical desublimation; we would suddenly become aware that there is nothing 'uncanny' in the house as such, that the house is – like the 'black house' in the Patricia Highsmith short story – just an ordinary old house. The effect of uneasiness would be radically 'psychologized'; we would say to ourselves, 'This is just an ordinary house; all the mystery and anxiety attached to it are just an effect of the heroine's psychic turmoil!'

The effect of 'uncanniness' would also be lost if Hitchcock had immediately added a shot 'subjectifying' the Thing, i.e., a subjective shot from inside the house. Let us imagine that as Lilah approached the house, there had been a trembling shot showing Lilah through the curtains of the house window, accompanied by the sound of hollow breathing, thus indicating that somebody was watching her from inside the house. Such a procedure (used regularly in standard thrillers) would, of course, intensify the strain. We would say to ourselves, 'This is terrible! There is somebody in the house (Norman's mother?) watching Lilah; she is in mortal danger without knowing it!' But such a subjectification would again suspend the status of the gaze *qua object*, reducing it to the subjective point of view of another diegetic personality. Sergei Eisenstein himself once risked such a direct subjectification, in a scene from *The Old and the New*, a film that celebrated the successes of the collectivization of Soviet agriculture in the late '20s.

It is a somewhat Lysenkoist scene demonstrating the way nature finds pleasure in subordinating itself to the new rules of collective farming, the way even cows and bulls mate more ardently once they are included in *kilkhozes*. In a quick tracking shot, the camera approaches a cow from behind, and in the next shot it becomes clear that this view of the camera was the view of a bull mounting a cow. Needless to say, the effect of this scene is so obscenely vulgar that it is almost nauseating. What we have here is a kind of Stalinist pornography.

It would be wiser, then, to turn away from this Stalinist obscenity to the Hollywood decency of Hitchcock. Let us return to the scene from *Psycho* in which Lilah approaches the house where 'Norman's mother' presumably lives. In what does its 'uncanny' dimension consist? Could we not best describe the effect of this scene by paraphrasing the words of Lacan: in a way, *it is already the house that gazes at Lilah*? Lilah sees the house, but nonetheless she cannot see it at the point from which it gazes back at her. Here the situation is the same as that which Lacan recollects from his youth and reports in *Seminar XI*: as a student on holiday, he joined a fishing expedition. Among the fishermen on the boat, there was a certain Petit-Jean who, pointing out an empty sardine can glittering in the sun, asked Lacan: '*You see the can? Do you see it? Well, it doesn't see you!*' Lacan's comment: 'If what Petit-Jean said to me, namely that the can did not see me, had any meaning, it was because in a sense, it was looking at me, all the same.' It was looking at him because, as Lacan explains, using a key notion of the Hitchcockian universe, 'I functioned somewhat like a spot in the picture.'[14] Among these uneducated fishermen earning their living with great difficulty, he was effectively out of place, 'the man who knew too much.'

The death drive

The examples we have analyzed thus far were purposely elementary; let us conclude then with an analysis of a scene in which the Hitchcockian montage is part of a more complex whole. The scene from *Sabotage* in which Sylvia Sidney kills Oscar Homolka. The two characters are dining together at home; Sylvia is still in a state of shock, having learned recently that Oscar, her husband, is a 'saboteur' guilty of the death of her younger brother who was blown up by a bomb on a bus. When Sylvia brings the vegetable platter to the table, the knife on the platter acts as a magnet. It is almost as if her hand, against her will, were compelled to grab it, yet she cannot resolve herself finally to do so. Oscar, who up till now has pursued banal, everyday table conversation, perceives that she is spellbound by the knife and what this augurs for him. He stands up and walks round the table toward her. When they are face to face, he reaches for the knife but, unable to complete the gesture, lets *her* grab it. The camera then moves in closer, showing only their faces and shoulders, so that it is not clear what is happening with their hands. Suddenly Oscar utters a short cry and falls down, without our knowing whether she stabbed him or he, in a suicidal gesture, impaled himself on the blade.

The first thing that deserves notice is the way the act of murder results from the encounter of two thwarted threatening gestures.[15] Both Sylvia's move forward with the knife and Oscar's move toward it correspond to the Lacanian definition of the threatening gesture: it is not an interrupted gesture, i.e., a gesture that is intended to be carried out, to be completed, but is thwarted by an external obstacle. It is, on the contrary, something that was already begun in order *not* to be accomplished, not to be brought to its conclusion.[16] The very structure of the threatening gesture is thus that of a theatrical, hysterical act, a split, self-hindered gesture: a gesture that cannot be accomplished not because of some external obstacle but because it is in itself the expression of a contradictory, self-conflicting desire – in this case, Sylvia's desire to stab Oscar and at the same time the prohibition that blocks the realization of this desire. Oscar's move (when, after becoming aware of her intention, he stands up and comes forward to meet

her) is again contradictory, split into his 'self-preserving' desire to snatch the knife from her and master her, and his 'masochistic' desire to offer himself to the stab of the knife, a desire conditioned by his morbid feeling of guilt. The successful act (the stabbing of Oscar) results thus from the encounter of two failed, hindered, split acts. Her desire to stab him is met by his own desire to be punished and, ultimately, killed. Apparently, Oscar moves forward to defend himself, but this move is at the same time supported by the desire to be stabbed, so that, in the end, it is of no importance which of the two 'really' carried out the crucial gesture (did she push the knife in or did he throw himself on the blade?). The 'murder' results from the overlap, the coincidence of her desire with his.

In relation to the structural place of Oscar's 'masochistic' desire, we should refer to the logic of fantasy elaborated by Freud in 'A Child Is Being Beaten.'[17] Freud explains here how the final form of the fantasy scene ('a child is being beaten') pre-supposes two previous phases. The first, 'sadistic' phase is 'my father is beating the child (my brother, somebody who is my rival double)'; the second is its 'masochistic' inversion: 'I am being beaten by my father'; while the third and final form of the fantasy renders indistinct, neutralizes the subject (who is doing the beating?) as well as the object (what child is being beaten?) in the impersonal 'a child is being beaten.' According to Freud, the crucial role belongs to the *second*, 'masochistic' phase: this is where the real trauma lies, this is the phase that is radically 'repressed.' We find no trace of it in the child's fantasizing, we can only *construct* it retroactively on the basis of 'clues' pointing to the fact that *there is something missing* between 'my father is beating the child,' and 'a child is being beaten.' Because we cannot transform the first form into the third, definite one, Freud reasons that intermediate form must intervene:

> This second phase is the most important and the most momentous of all. But we may say of it that in a certain sense it has never had a real existence. It is never remembered, it has never succeeded in becoming conscious. It is a construction of analysis, but it is no less a necessity on that account.[18]

The second form of the fantasy is thus the Lacanian real: a point that never took place 'in (symbolic) reality,' that has never been inscribed in the symbolic texture, but that must nonetheless be presupposed as a kind of 'missing link' guaranteeing the consistency of our symbolic reality. Our thesis is that Hitchcockian murders (in addition to Oscar's death in *Sabotage*, let us mention at least the final fall of the saboteur from the Statue of Liberty in *Saboteur* and Gromek's murder in *Torn Curtain*) are governed by a homologous fantasy logic. The first phase is always 'sadistic,' it consists in our identification with the hero who finally gets the opportunity to have done with the villain. We cannot wait to see Sylvia finish the evil Oscar, to see the decent American push the Nazi saboteur over the railing, to see Paul Newman get rid of Gromek, etc. The final phase is, of course, the compassionate inversion. When we see that the 'villain' is really a helpless, broken being, we are overwhelmed with compassion and guilt, we are punished for our previous 'sadistic' desire. In *Saboteur*, the hero tries desperately to *save* the villain suspended by his sleeve, the seams of which tear one by one; in *Sabotage*, Sylvia compassionately embraces the dying Oscar, preventing him from hitting the floor; in *Torn Curtain*, the very long duration of the act of murder, the clumsiness of Paul Newman, and the desperate resistance of the victim render the whole affair extremely painful, barely supportable.

At first it may seem that it is possible to pass directly from the first to the final phase of the fantasy, i.e., from sadistic pleasure at the imminent destruction of the villain to a sense of guilt and compassion. But if this were all, Hitchcock would be simply a kind of moralist presenting us with the price to be paid for our 'sadistic' desire: 'You wanted the villain to be killed, now you've got it and must suffer the consequences!' There is in Hitchcock, however, always an intermediate

phase. The 'sadistic' desire for the villain to be killed is followed by a sudden awareness that it is actually the 'villain' himself who is in a stifled but nonetheless unequivocal way disgusted with his own corruption and wants to be 'delivered' from this unbearable pressure through his own punishment and death. This is the delicate moment in which we become aware that the hero's (and thus our, the spectators') desire to annihilate the 'villain' *is already the desire of the 'villain' himself*. In *Sabotage*, for example, it is the moment at which it becomes clear that Sylvia's desire to stab Oscar overlaps with Oscar's desire to exculpate himself via his own death. This constant implicit presence of a tendency to self-annihilation, of an enjoyment found in provoking one's own ruin, in short of the death drive, is what bestows upon the Hitchcockian 'villain' his ambiguous charm, and it is at the same time what prevents us from passing immediately from the initial 'sadism' to a final compassion for the villain. This compassion is based upon an awareness that the villain himself experiences his guilt and wants to die. In other words, our compassion arises only when we become aware of the *ethical* attitude contained in the villain's subjective position.

What, however, has all this to do with Hitchcockian montage? In this final scene of *Sabotage*, although Sylvia is its emotional center, she is, nevertheless, the scene's object – Oscar is its subject. That is to say, it is *his* subjective perspective that articulates the rhythm of the scene. In the beginning, Oscar pursues the usual dinner conversation and entirely fails to notice Sylvia's extreme inner tension. When she becomes transfixed by the knife, the astonished Oscar glances at her and becomes aware of her desire. This introduces the first scansion: the empty chatter comes to a halt as it becomes clear to Oscar what Sylvia is contemplating. Thereupon he stands up and steps forward to meet her. This part of the action is shot in the manner of Hitchcockian montage, i.e., the camera first shows us Oscar approaching Sylvia around the table and then Oscar's view of the paralyzed, inflexible Sylvia, staring at him in desperation, as if asking him to help her make up her mind. When they find themselves face to face, he is himself paralyzed and lets *her* grab the knife. Then we are given a shot of their exchange of glances, i.e., we do not see what is going on below their waists. Suddenly, he utters an incomprehensible cry. Next shot: a close-up of her hand holding the knife stabbed deep into his chest. Thereupon she embraces him, as in an act of compassion, before he collapses to the floor. So he helped her indeed: by moving close to her, he let her know that he has accepted her desire as his own, i.e., that he also wants to die. No wonder, then, that afterward Sylvia embraces him compassionately. He has, so to speak, met her halfway, he has delivered her from unbearable tension.[19]

The moment of Hitchcockian montage – the moment at which Oscar advances toward Sylvia – is thus the moment at which Oscar accepts her desire as his own or, to refer to the Lacanian definition of the hysteric's desire as the desire of the other, the moment at which Oscar is hystericized. When we see Sylvia through Oscar's eyes, in the subjective shot of the camera approaching her, we witness the moment at which Oscar becomes aware that her desire overlaps his own, i.e., that he himself yearns to die – the moment at which he takes upon himself the lethal gaze of the other.

Notes

1 Jacques Lacan, 'God and the *Jouissance* of The Woman,' in *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, New York: Norton, 1982, p. 147.

2 In this respect, the pervert's subjective position differs clearly from those of the obsessional neurotic and the psychotic. Both the pervert and the obsessional are caught in frenetic activity in service of the big Other; the difference is, however, that the aim of the obsessional's activity is to *prevent* the big Other from enjoying (i.e., the 'catastrophe' he fears will erupt if his activity ceases is ultimately the enjoyment

of the Other); whereas the pervert works precisely *to ensure* that the big Other's 'will to enjoyment' will be satisfied. This is why the pervert is free of the eternal doubt and oscillation that characterize the obsessional: he simply takes for granted that his activity serves the enjoyment of the Other. The psychotic, on the other hand, is himself the *object* of the Other's enjoyment, his 'complement' (like Schreber, who conceived himself as God's sexual partner): it is the Other who works on him, in contrast to the pervert, who is just an instrument, a neutral tool working for the Other.

3 Cf. Lacan, *Ecrits*, pp. 774–775.

4 The other, in some way complementary determination of 'totalitarianism' (more specifically, far-right totalitarianism), also consists in a kind of short circuit, not this time between subject and object (the subject being reduced to the object-instrument of the Other), but between the ideological signification produced by the symbolic code (the big Other) and the fantasies by means of which the big Other of ideology conceals its inconsistency, its lack. To refer to the mathemes in the Lacanian 'graph of desire,' this short circuit takes place between *s*(A) and $\$ \lozenge a$. (Cf. Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, p. 313). Let us take the case of neoconservativism: on the level of the signified – *s*(A) – this ideology offers us a field of meaning structured around the opposition between secular, egalitarian humanism and the values of family, law and order, responsibility, and self-reliance. Within this field, freedom is supposed to be menaced not only by Communism, but also by the welfare state bureaucracy, etc., etc. At the same time, however, this ideology works 'between the lines,' on an unspoken level, i.e., by not directly mentioning these menaces but by implying them as a silent surmise of its discourse. A whole series of fantasies are in play without which we cannot explain the efficacy of neoconservatism, the fact that it can capture subjects in such a passionate way: sexist fantasies about the menace that unruly 'liberated' female sexuality presents for men; the racist fantasy that the WASP is the embodiment of Man *qua* Man and that beneath every black, yellow, etc., there is a white American longing to emerge; the fantasy that the 'other' – the enemy – endeavors to rob us of our enjoyment, that he has access to some hidden enjoyment, inaccessible to us; and so on. Neoconservativism lives on this difference, it relies on fantasies that it cannot put into words, integrate into the field of its ideological signification. The frontier that divides neoconservativism from rightist totalitarianism is trespassed precisely at the moment there is a short circuit between the field of signification and these fantasies, i.e., when fantasies directly invade the field of signification, when they are directly referred to – as, for example, in Nazism, which openly articulates (includes in the field of its ideological meaning) the whole texture of sexual and other fantasies that serve as support of anti-Semitism. Nazi ideology openly states that Jews seduce our innocent daughters, that they are capable of perverse pleasures, etc.; this ideology does not leave it up to the addressee to surmise these 'acts.' Herein lies the grain of truth of the common wisdom according to which the difference between the 'moderate' and 'radical' right consists merely in the fact that the latter says openly what the former thinks without daring to say.

5 Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, p. 109.

6 It is precisely because in pornography, the picture does *not* gaze back at us, because it is 'flat,' without any mysterious 'spot' needing to be looked at 'awry' in order to assume distinct form, that the fundamental prohibition determining the direction of the gaze of actors on the screen is suspended: in a pornographic movie, the actor – as a rule, the woman – in the moment of intense sexual pleasure looks directly into the camera, addressing us, the spectators.

7 This paradox of 'impossible knowledge' that is inscribed in the way persons react on screen is far more interesting than it appears at first sight; for example, it offers us a way of explaining the logic of the *cameo appearances* of Hitchcock in his own films. What is his worst film? *Topaz*. In it, Hitchcock appears in a wheelchair in an airport lounge, as if wishing to inform us that his creative power is definitely crippled. In his last film, *Family Plot*, he appears as a shadow on the windowpane of the registry office, as if wishing to inform us that he is already close to death. Every one of his cameo appearances reveals such an 'impossible knowledge,' as if Hitchcock were capable of assuming for an instant a position of pure metalanguage, of taking an 'objective look' at himself and locating himself in the picture.

8 Cf. Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,' in *New Left Review* 146 (1984).
9 Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, p. 74.
10 This problem was first articulated by Noël Burch in his theory of off-screen space, i.e., of a specific exterior implied, constituted by the very interplay of the shot and counter-shot; cf. Noël Burch, *The Theory of Film Practice*, New York: Praeger, 1973.
11 Cf. Raymond Bellour, *L'analyse du film*, Paris: Edition Albatros, 1979.
12 It is no coincidence that in both cases, the object approached by the hero is a *house* – apropos of *Notorious*, Pascal Bonitzer developed a detailed theory of the house as the location of an incestuous secret in Hitchcock's work; cf. Pascal Bonitzer, 'Notorious,' in *Cahiers du cinéma* 358 (1980).
13 In his ironic, amiably sadistic teasing of the spectator, Hitchcock takes into account precisely this gap between the formal procedure and the content to which it is applied, i.e., the fact that anxiety results from a purely formal procedure. First, by means of formal manipulation, he bestows upon an everyday, trivial object an aura of mystery and anxiety; it then becomes manifest that this object effectively *is* just an everyday object. The best-known case of this is found in the second version of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. On a suburban London street, James Stewart approaches a lonely stranger. Silently, they exchange glances as an atmosphere of tension and anxiety is created; it seems that the stranger is threatening Stewart. But we soon discover that Stewart's suspicion is entirely unfounded – the stranger is just an accidental passerby.
14 Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 95–96.
15 Cf. Mladen Dolar, 'L'agent secret: le spectateur qui en savait trop,' in Slavoj Žižek, ed., *Tout ce que Vous avez toujours voulu savoir sur Lacan sans jamais oser le demander à Hitchcock*, Paris: Navarin, 1988.
16 'What is a gesture? A threatening gesture, for example? It is not a blow that is interrupted. It is certainly something that is done in order to be arrested and suspended.' (Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, p. 116.)
17 Cf. Sigmund Freud, 'A Child Is Being Beaten,' *SE*, vol. 10.
18 Ibid., p. 185.
19 François Truffaut not only pointed out that this scene 'almost suggests suicide rather than murder,' but also drew the parallel between Oscar's and Carmen's death: 'It's as if Oscar Homolka were allowing himself to be killed by Sylvia Sidney. Prosper Merimée staged Carmen's death on the same dramatic principle, with the victim thrusting her body forward to meet the slayer's fatal stab.' (François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, London, Panther Books, 1969, p. 120.)

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Slavoj Žižek in English

The Sublime Object of Ideology, London: Verso, 1989.
Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991.
For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor, London: Verso, 1991.
Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out, New York: Routledge, 1992.
Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology, Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.
The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality, London: Verso, 1994.
The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters, London: Verso, 1996.
The Plague of Fantasies (Wo Es War), London: Verso, 1997.
The Abyss of Freedom, with F.W.J. von Schelling, *Ages of the World*, trans. J. Norman, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.
The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology, London: Verso, 1999.
The Fragile Absolute – Or, Why is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?, London: Verso, 2000.
Hegemony, Contingency, Universality (with J. Butler and E. Laclau), London: Verso, 2000.
The Fright of Real Tears: Krzystof Kieślowski Between Theory and Post-Theory, London: BFI Publishing, 2001.

On Belief, London: Routledge, 2001.
Did Someone Say Totalitarianism? Five Interventions in the (Mis)use of a Notion, London: Verso, 2001.
Welcome to the Desert of the Real, London: Verso, 2002.
Opera's Second Death (with M. Dolar), New York: Routledge, 2002.
The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.
Organs Without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences, New York: Routledge, 2003.
Conversations with Žižek (with G. Daly), London: Polity Press, 2004.
Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle, London: Verso, 2004.
Philosophy in the Present (with A. Badiou; 2005), ed. P. Engelmann, trans. P. Thomas and A. Toscano, Cambridge: Polity, 2009.
Interrogating the Real: Selected Writings, eds R. Butler and S. Stephens, New York: Continuum, 2005.
The Universal Exception: Selected Writings, eds R. Butler and S. Stephens, London: Continuum, 2006.
The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology (with E.L. Santner and K. Reinhard), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.
The Parallax View, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006.
How to Read Lacan, New York: Norton, 2007.
In Defense of Lost Causes, London: Verso, 2008.
Violence, New York: Picador, 2008.
First as Tragedy, Then as Farce, London: Verso, 2009.
The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic? (with John Milbank), ed. C. Davis, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009.
Living in the End Times, London: Verso, 2010.
The Žižek Reader, eds E. Wright and E. Wright, Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.

Further reading

Introductions to Žižek are available from Kay (2003), Myers (2003), Parker (2004), and Pound (2008). Critical commentaries are given by Boucher *et al*. (2006), Bowman and Stamp (2007), and Vighi and Feldner (2007b).

Žižek's relationship with psychoanalysis is explored by T. Dean (2002), Hanlon (2001), and Reinhard (2001). His political thought is examined by J. Dean (2006) and Sharpe and Boucher (2010), while his theological claims are addressed by Hewitt-Horsman (2006), Kotsko (2008), Manolopoulos (2007), Moriarty (2001), and Yang (2009). Butler (2005), Johnston (2008), and Sharpe (2004) consider in what sense Žižek's thought can be regarded as systematic, while Harpham (2003), Johnston (2009), and Vighi and Feldner (2007a) reflect upon his position within philosophy or in relation to other philosophers.

For studies of his aesthetics and media theory, see Bird (2004), Flieger (2001), Nicol (2001), Rickert (2002, 2007), Samuels (2010), Sharpe (2006), Taylor (2010), and Vighi (2003).

R. Bird, 'The suspended aesthetic: Slavoj Žižek on Eastern European film', *Studies in East European Thought*, 2004, vol. 56, pp. 357–82.
G. Boucher, J. Glynos, and M. Sharpe (eds), *Traversing the Fantasy: Critical Responses to Slavoj Žižek*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.
P. Bowman and R. Stamp (eds), *The Truth of Žižek*, London: Continuum, 2007.
R. Butler, *Slavoj Žižek: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2005.
J. Dean, *Žižek's Politics*, London: Routledge, 2006.
T. Dean, 'Art as symptom: Žižek and the ethics of psychoanalytic criticism', *Diacritics*, 2002, vol. 32, pp. 21–41.
J.A. Flieger, 'Has Oedipus signed off (or struck out)? Žižek, Lacan and the field of cyberspace', *Paragraph*, 2001, vol. 24, pp. 53–77.
C. Hanlon, 'Psychoanalysis and the post-political: an interview with Slavoj Žižek', *New Literary History*, 2001, vol. 32, pp. 1–21.
G.G. Harpham, 'Doing the impossible: Slavoj Žižek and the end of knowledge', *Critical Inquiry*, 2003, vol. 29, pp. 453–85.
S. Hewitt-Horsman, 'Žižek on Christianity', *Theology*, 2006, vol. 109, pp. 103–10.
A. Johnston, *Žižek's Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008.

———, *Badiou, Žižek, and Political Transformations: The Cadence of Change*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009.
S. Kay, *Žižek: A Critical Introduction*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003.
A. Kotsko, *Žižek and Theology*, New York: T. and T. Clark, 2008.
M. Manolopoulos, 'Why Christianity is so ingenious, or why Žižek is ("only") half right', *Pacifica*, 2007, vol. 20, pp. 52–70.
M. Moriarty, 'Žižek, religion and ideology', *Paragraph*, 2001, vol. 24, pp. 125–39.
T. Myers, *Slavoj Žižek*, London: Routledge, 2003.
B. Nicol, 'As if: traversing the fantasy in Žižek', *Paragraph*, 2001, vol. 24, pp. 140–55.
I. Parker, *Slavoj Žižek: A Critical Introduction*, London: Pluto Press, 2004.
M. Pound, *Žižek: A (Very) Critical Introduction (Interventions)*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.
K. Reinhard, 'Coming to America: psychoanalytic criticism in the age of Žižek', *Paragraph*, 2001, vol. 24, pp. 156–64.
T. Rickert, 'Enjoying theory: Žižek, critique, accountability', *JAC: Journal of Composition Theory*, 2002, vol. 22, pp. 627–39.
———, *Acts of Enjoyment: Rhetoric, Žižek, and the Return of the Subject*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007.
R. Samuels, *New Media, Cultural Studies, and Critical Theory after Postmodernism: Automodernity from Žižek to Laclau*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
M. Sharpe, *Slavoj Žižek: A Little Piece of the Real*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.
———, 'The aesthetics of ideology, or "The critique of ideological judgment" in Eagleton and Žižek', *Political Theory*, 2006, vol. 34, pp. 95–120.
M. Sharpe and G. Boucher, *Žižek and Politics: A Critical Introduction*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.
P.A. Taylor, *Žižek and the Media*, Cambridge: Polity, 2010.
F. Vighi, 'Pasolini and exclusion: Žižek, Agamben and the modern sub-proletariat', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 2003, vol. 20, pp. 99–122.
F. Vighi and H. Feldner, *Žižek: Beyond Foucault*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007a.
———, ——— (eds), *Did Somebody Say Ideology? On Slavoj Žižek and Consequences*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007b.
H.L. Yang, 'The perverse theology and its implication for literary studies: a cultural interpretation of Žižek's theology', *Foreign Literature Studies*, 2009, vol. 31, pp. 127–34.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

PART 5

Embodiment and Technology

Introduction

WHY 'EMBODIMENT *AND* TECHNOLOGY'? Surely the two are quite separate? Surely having a body and the development of technology are two distinct dimensions of human being? The body is something we have, something we are in; whereas technology is an external set of tools, devices, and environments which we may or may not adopt, depending on the situation. The problem with this understanding, however, is that it relies on a Cartesian perspective which presents bodies and technological items merely as two kinds of thing in the world and, more significantly, as two kinds of thing that are directed by minds. It fails to acknowledge the dismantling of the subject–object distinction in Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Marx, and many schools of twentieth-century continental thought. The idea of a self-sustaining, internally coherent subject, it is argued, can no longer be relied upon, either as a foundation or as a source of political hope, because the various concepts of self-sustenance involved presuppose religious, political, or philosophical ideas that are open to question, e.g. doctrines of the soul, and the concept of the self as something with resources of its own, distinct from those of its surrounding context or community. Instead, philosophy turns to the situations and manipulations through which we act and locate ourselves in the world, as indicators of the predicaments and possibilities which threaten and enable values, meanings, and identities. The body is regarded not as a thing but as a state of 'embodiment': the condition of being rooted and distributed in an environment in such a way as to frustrate any conventional regime of categorization, and to invite, if not demand, new, alternative, possibility-generating forms of description. Similarly, technology ceases to be just novel gadgets and 'tools for the job' and becomes a way of being in a situation: the arrangements and constructions we are able to make in (response to) a situation which go on to change *how we are in* that situation. Thus, embodiment and technology are retheorized as networks of relationship whose terms are prior to any simplistic subject–world duality and are responsible for defining what is possible. The questions remain though as to whether the possibilities which become actual are desirable, and what forms technological and embodied practice should take to achieve cultural and political progress.

A subtitle for this section – which includes chapters from Walter Benjamin, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean Baudrillard, Judith Butler, and Paul Virilio – could have been 'displacements'. If

embodiment and technology are understood as networks of relationship, then their efficacy, their effect on the world, will occur through changes in relationship, shifts in the distribution of terms. For Walter Benjamin, mechanical reproduction cancels the aura of natural and historical objects by bringing them closer, by effacing the relationships which situate an object in a time, place, and tradition. Merleau-Ponty redefines the body, transforming it from being a thing to being an ontology, a 'body schema': a framework through which subjectivity and world are opened up for one another. Pivotal to the body's becoming an ontology is its condition as something which oscillates between *seeing* and *being seen*, and it is this state of affairs, Merleau-Ponty declares in 'Eye and Mind', which animates the early modern painter. Consequences of the multiplied technological image are considered by Baudrillard. He argues that experience has become saturated with media imagery to the point where we move from reality to hyperreality, a condition where representation *creates* worlds rather than adhering or corresponding to an already-existing reality. Judith Butler turns to the materiality of the body and its relationship with gender performativity. She challenges the idea that 'sex' is a biological given, arguing that what we take to be material boundaries are divisions that have stabilized over time because discourse performatively creates the things that it names. However, she argues, performativity can also generate spaces which exceed these normative boundaries, thereby opening up possibilities not acknowledged by governing discourses. With Paul Virilio, the speed of technological perception creates an 'aesthetics of disappearance' in as much as vital human attributes are lost and technological properties are acquired: images are too fast to be experienced and, as a result, they create a technologically dependent state of desire which becomes us.

Chapter 24

WALTER BENJAMIN

INTRODUCTION

The German theorist and critic Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) is one of the leading thinkers on modernity. The scope and diversity of his work are uncannily appropriate to his position on modern culture. With stylistic forms including prose, dialogue, and aphorism, and subjects ranging from colour in Kant, German tragic drama, translation, and history, to surrealism, Baudelaire, city life, and the arcades of Paris, his oeuvre represents the fragmentary, ever-changing flow of stimuli he held to be definitive of modern urban experience. The observations he made on suicide in his study of Baudelaire, however, have assumed a terrible poignancy. Benjamin took his own life on the night of 25 September 1940 while fleeing from the Nazis. Refused a pass at the French-Spanish border, he could not face the thought of being captured by the Gestapo. Suicide, Benjamin wrote in *Charles Baudelaire*, 'is not a resignation but a heroic passion. It is *the* achievement of modernism in the realm of the passions.'[1] The concept of suicide as a heroic act is based upon Baudelaire's concept of the modern artist as hero, defiant in the face of hostility. Suicide is 'an act which seals a heroic will that makes no concessions to a mentality inimical towards this will'.[2] The Cartesian structure of modernism and modernity means the individual is always ultimately conceived as an entity who stands before or against the world. Even the Second World War can be seen to rest upon the oppositions of modernity when one considers the technological mastery which enabled it, and the commitment to a universal, overriding truth which motivated it. On these terms, suicide becomes the expression of a will that makes no concessions to modernity.

'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936) considers the changes undergone by art and representation in modernity. With connections being drawn between art, politics, and signification, and with implications that prepare the ground for postmodernity, it is understandable why this has become the essay for which Benjamin is most well known. A pre-modern work of art, Benjamin suggests, invites critical contemplation because it is 'authentic': it is rooted in a tradition and, therefore, requires knowledge of the tradition in order to be appreciated. However, mechanical reproduction threatens authenticity, since works can be reproduced out of context and *ad infinitum*, reduced to one unit among many in a homogeneous flow of moving images. The work of art, in this respect, to introduce Benjamin's famous concept, is losing its 'aura'.

Benjamin defines 'aura' in terms of distance. Scanning a mountain range on the horizon or watching the play of shadows cast by a branch, as experiences, are outside of us and cannot be brought any nearer without changing the nature of the experience. Both the mountain range and the branch, Benjamin avers, have to be in their particular setting otherwise we would not be able to appreciate the way *their position in relation to us* affects our sensibilities. Against this, he claims, mechanical reproduction gives us everything here and now. It nullifies the aura of natural and

historical objects by bringing them closer, by effacing the relationships which locate an object and which make it the particular thing it is. For Benjamin, the loss of aura is a positive development, promoting new forms of art whose value lies not in their ceremonial role or their price but in what he terms their 'exhibition value', where what matters is not the *existence* of a work but the fact that it is *on view*. Exhibition value has political significance in that mechanical reproduction can *bring to light* overlooked details of the commonplace and open up unimagined horizons for action, suggesting 'entirely new structural formations of the subject'. However, while earlier techniques of reproduction took time to complete and their end products required time for contemplation, film reproduces its objects and delivers its images with an immediacy that leaves no time for the formation of critical judgment after the initial impact. Art is now something that happens to us rather than an object which we frame and consider from a distance.

The epilogue to 'The Work of Art' relates perception in modernity to the prospect of war. The final paragraph offers sombre reflection: mankind's 'self-alienation has reached such a degree', Benjamin writes, 'that it can experience its own self-destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order'. War, he suggests, is a Fascist response to the unemployment and the inequalities which result when 'the tremendous means of production' are not properly integrated in society. It is an analogous lack of integration that Benjamin finds in the experience of film; in this case, lack of integration with the faculties of contemplation and judgment which allow the viewer to consider the implications of what she is seeing. Just as war is regarded as the provider of solutions, so it becomes a source of artistic gratification for a medium in which any objective, referential value is suspended.

Experience has certainly borne out Benjamin's claim that perception changes with technology, and the interwoven logics of representation and war have been developed by Baudrillard and Virilio. However, what has also emerged is that perception evolves in such a way as to generate the possibility of critical distance and scope for new forms of reproduction. Thus, for example, we are now sufficiently familiar with film in order to be able to locate any example within a genre and, therefore, to experience a gap between image and object rather than just a homogeneous flow with no room for comment. This possibility was either something Benjamin failed to anticipate or something he judged to be too optimistic for the time in which he was writing.

Notes

1 W. Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*, trans. H. Zohn, London: Verso, 1997, p. 75.
2 Ibid., p. 75.

■ ■ ■

THE WORK OF ART IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION

WALTER BENJAMIN

> Our fine arts were developed, their types and uses were established, in times very different from the present, by men whose power of action upon things was insignificant in comparison with ours. But the amazing growth of our techniques, the adaptability and precision they have attained, the ideas and habits they are creating, make it a certainty that profound changes are impending in the ancient craft of the Beautiful. In all the arts there is a physical component

> which can no longer be considered or treated as it used to be, which cannot remain unaffected by our modern knowledge and power. For the last twenty years neither matter nor space nor time has been what it was from time immemorial. We must expect great innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts, thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bringing about an amazing change in our very notion of art.[1]
>
> (Paul Valéry, *Pièces sur l'art*, 'La Conquète de l'ubiquité.' Paris)

Preface

When Marx undertook his critique of the capitalistic mode of production, this mode was in its infancy. Marx directed his efforts in such a way as to give them prognostic value. He went back to the basic conditions underlying capitalistic production and through his presentation showed what could be expected of capitalism in the future. The result was that one could expect it not only to exploit the proletariat with increasing intensity, but ultimately to create conditions which would make it possible to abolish capitalism itself.

The transformation of the superstructure, which takes place far more slowly than that of the substructure, has taken more than half a century to manifest in all areas of culture the change in the conditions of production. Only today can it be indicated what form this has taken. Certain prognostic requirements should be met by these statements. However, theses about the art of the proletariat after its assumption of power or about the art of a classless society would have less bearing on these demands than theses about the developmental tendencies of art under present conditions of production. Their dialectic is no less noticeable in the superstructure than in the economy. It would therefore be wrong to underestimate the value of such theses as a weapon. They brush aside a number of outmoded concepts, such as creativity and genius, eternal value and mystery – concepts whose uncontrolled (and at present almost uncontrollable) application would lead to a processing of data in the Fascist sense. The concepts which are introduced into the theory of art in what follows differ from the more familiar terms in that they are completely useless for the purposes of fascism. They are, on the other hand, useful for the formulation of revolutionary demands in the politics of art.

I

In principle a work of art has always been reproducible. Man-made artifacts could always be imitated by men. Replicas were made by pupils in practice of their craft, by masters for diffusing their works, and, finally, by third parties in the pursuit of gain. Mechanical reproduction of a work of art, however, represents something new. Historically, it advanced intermittently and in leaps at long intervals, but with accelerated intensity. The Greeks knew only two procedures of technically reproducing works of art: founding and stamping. Bronzes, terracottas, and coins were the only art works which they could produce in quantity. All others were unique and could not be mechanically reproduced. With the woodcut graphic art became mechanically reproducible for the first time, long before script became reproducible by print. The enormous changes which printing, the mechanical reproduction of writing, has brought about in literature are a familiar story. However, within the phenomenon which we are here examining from the perspective of world history, print is merely a special, though particularly important, case. During the Middle Ages engraving and etching were added to the woodcut; at the beginning of the nineteenth century lithography made its appearance.

With lithography the technique of reproduction reached an essentially new stage. This much more direct process was distinguished by the tracing of the design on a stone rather than its incision

on a block of wood or its etching on a copperplate and permitted graphic art for the first time to put its products on the market, not only in large numbers as hitherto, but also in daily changing forms. Lithography enabled graphic art to illustrate everyday life, and it began to keep pace with printing. But only a few decades after its invention, lithography was surpassed by photography. For the first time in the process of pictorial reproduction, photography freed the hand of the most important artistic functions which henceforth devolved only upon the eye looking into a lens. Since the eye perceives more swiftly than the hand can draw, the process of pictorial reproduction was accelerated so enormously that it could keep pace with speech. A film operator shooting a scene in the studio captures the images at the speed of an actor's speech. Just as lithography virtually implied the illustrated newspaper, so did photography foreshadow the sound film. The technical reproduction of sound was tackled at the end of the last century. These convergent endeavors made predictable a situation which Paul Valéry pointed up in this sentence:

> Just as water, gas, and electricity are brought into our houses from far off to satisfy our needs in response to a minimal effort, so we shall be supplied with visual or auditory images, which will appear and disappear at a simple movement of the hand, hardly more than a sign.
>
> (Ibid., p. 226)

Around 1900 technical reproduction had reached a standard that not only permitted it to reproduce all transmitted works of art and thus to cause the most profound change in their impact upon the public; it also had captured a place of its own among the artistic processes. For the study of this standard nothing is more revealing than the nature of the repercussions that these two different manifestations – the reproduction of works of art and the art of the film – have had on art in its traditional form.

II

Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be. This unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was subject throughout the time of its existence. This includes the changes which it may have suffered in physical condition over the years as well as the various changes in its ownership.[2] The traces of the first can be revealed only by chemical or physical analyses which it is impossible to perform on a reproduction; changes of ownership are subject to a tradition which must be traced from the situation of the original.

The presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity. Chemical analyses of the patina of a bronze can help to establish this, as does the proof that a given manuscript of the Middle Ages stems from an archive of the fifteenth century. The whole sphere of authenticity is outside technical – and, of course, not only technical – reproducibility.[3] Confronted with its manual reproduction, which was usually branded as a forgery, the original preserved all its authority; not so vis-à-vis technical reproduction. The reason is twofold. First, process reproduction is more independent of the original than manual reproduction. For example, in photography, process reproduction can bring out those aspects of the original that are unattainable to the naked eye yet accessible to the lens, which is adjustable and chooses its angle at will. And photographic reproduction, with the aid of certain processes, such as enlargement or slow motion, can capture images which escape natural vision. Secondly, technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself. Above all, it enables the original to meet the beholder halfway, be it in the form of a photograph or a phonograph record.

The cathedral leaves its locale to be received in the studio of a lover of art; the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, resounds in the drawing room.

The situations into which the product of mechanical reproduction can be brought may not touch the actual work of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated. This holds not only for the art work but also, for instance, for a landscape which passes in review before the spectator in a movie. In the case of the art object, a most sensitive nucleus – namely, its authenticity – is interfered with whereas no natural object is vulnerable on that score. The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object.[4]

One might subsume the eliminated element in the term 'aura' and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art.

This is a symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced. These two processes lead to a tremendous shattering of tradition which is the obverse of the contemporary crisis and renewal of mankind. Both processes are intimately connected with the contemporary mass movements. Their most powerful agent is the film. Its social significance, particularly in its most positive form, is inconceivable without its destructive, cathartic aspect, that is, the liquidation of the traditional value of the cultural heritage. This phenomenon is most palpable in the great historical films. It extends to ever new positions. In 1927 Abel Gance exclaimed enthusiastically: 'Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Beethoven will make films … all legends, all mythologies and all myths, all founders of religion, and the very religions … await their exposed resurrection, and the heroes crowd each other at the gate.'[5] Presumably without intending it, he issued an invitation to a far-reaching liquidation.

III

During long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well. The fifth century, with its great shifts of population, saw the birth of the late Roman art industry and the Vienna Genesis, and there developed not only an art different from that of antiquity but also a new kind of perception. The scholars of the Viennese school, Riegl and Wickhoff, who resisted the weight of classical tradition under which these later art forms had been buried, were the first to draw conclusions from them concerning the organization of perception at the time. However far-reaching their insight, these scholars limited themselves to showing the significant, formal hallmark which characterized perception in late Roman times. They did not attempt – and, perhaps, saw no way – to show the social transformations expressed by these changes of perception. The conditions for an analogous insight are more favorable in the present. And if changes in the medium of contemporary perception can be comprehended as decay of the aura, it is possible to show its social causes.

The concept of aura which was proposed above with reference to historical objects may usefully be illustrated with reference to the aura of natural ones. We define the aura of the latter as the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be. If, while resting on a summer

afternoon, you follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon or a branch which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of those mountains, of that branch. This image makes it easy to comprehend the social bases of the contemporary decay of the aura. It rests on two circumstances, both of which are related to the increasing significance of the masses in contemporary life. Namely, the desire of contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction.[6] Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction.

Unmistakably, reproduction as offered by picture magazines and newsreels differs from the image seen by the unarmed eye. Uniqueness and permanence are as closely linked in the latter as are transitoriness and reproducibility in the former. To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose 'sense of the universal equality of things' has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction. Thus is manifested in the field of perception what in the theoretical sphere is noticeable in the increasing importance of statistics. The adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope, as much for thinking as for perception.

IV

The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being imbedded in the fabric of tradition. This tradition itself is thoroughly alive and extremely changeable. An ancient statue of Venus, for example, stood in a different traditional context with the Greeks, who made it an object of veneration, than with the clerics of the Middle Ages, who viewed it as an ominous idol. Both of them, however, were equally confronted with its uniqueness, that is, its aura. Originally the contextual integration of art in tradition found its expression in the cult. We know that the earliest art works originated in the service of a ritual – first the magical, then the religious kind. It is significant that the existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function.[7] In other words, the unique value of the 'authentic' work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value. This ritualistic basis, however remote, is still recognizable as secularized ritual even in the most profane forms of the cult of beauty.[8] The secular cult of beauty, developed during the Renaissance and prevailing for three centuries, clearly showed that ritualistic basis in its decline and the first deep crisis which befell it. With the advent of the first truly revolutionary means of reproduction, photography, simultaneously with the rise of socialism, art sensed the approaching crisis which has become evident a century later. At the time, art reacted with the doctrine of *l'art pour l'art*, that is, with a theology of art. This gave rise to what might be called a negative theology in the form of the idea of 'pure' art, which not only denied any social function of art but also any categorizing by subject matter. (In poetry, Mallarmé was the first to take this position.)

An analysis of art in the age of mechanical reproduction must do justice to these relationships, for they lead us to an all-important insight: for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility.[9] From a photographic negative, for example, one can make any number of prints; to ask for the 'authentic' print makes no sense. But the instant the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice – politics.

V

Works of art are received and valued on different planes. Two polar types stand out: with one, the accent is on the cult value; with the other, on the exhibition value of the work.[10] Artistic production begins with ceremonial objects destined to serve in a cult. One may assume that what mattered was their existence, not their being on view. The elk portrayed by the man of the Stone Age on the walls of his cave was an instrument of magic. He did expose it to his fellow men, but in the main it was meant for the spirits. Today the cult value would seem to demand that the work of art remain hidden. Certain statues of gods are accessible only to the priest in the cella; certain Madonnas remain covered nearly all year round; certain sculptures on medieval cathedrals are invisible to the spectator on ground level. With the emancipation of the various art practices from ritual go increasing opportunities for the exhibition of their products. It is easier to exhibit a portrait bust that can be sent here and there than to exhibit the statue of a divinity that has its fixed place in the interior of a temple. The same holds for the painting as against the mosaic or fresco that preceded it. And even though the public presentability of a mass originally may have been just as great as that of a symphony, the latter originated at the moment when its public presentability promised to surpass that of the mass.

With the different methods of technical reproduction of a work of art, its fitness for exhibition increased to such an extent that the quantitative shift between its two poles turned into a qualitative transformation of its nature. This is comparable to the situation of the work of art in prehistoric times when, by the absolute emphasis on its cult value, it was, first and foremost, an instrument of magic. Only later did it come to be recognized as a work of art. In the same way today, by the absolute emphasis on its exhibition value the work of art becomes a creation with entirely new functions, among which the one we are conscious of, the artistic function, later may be recognized as incidental.[11] This much is certain: today photography and the film are the most serviceable exemplifications of this new function.

VI

In photography, exhibition value begins to displace cult value all along the line. But cult value does not give way without resistance. It retires into an ultimate retrenchment: the human countenance. It is no accident that the portrait was the focal point of early photography. The cult of remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead, offers a last refuge for the cult value of the picture. For the last time the aura emanates from the early photographs in the fleeting expression of a human face. This is what constitutes their melancholy, incomparable beauty. But as man withdraws from the photographic image, the exhibition value for the first time shows its superiority to the ritual value. To have pinpointed this new stage constitutes the incomparable significance of Atget, who, around 1900, took photographs of deserted Paris streets. It has quite justly been said of him that he photographed them like scenes of crime. The scene of a crime, too, is deserted; it is photographed for the purpose of establishing evidence. With Atget, photographs become standard evidence for historical occurrences, and acquire a hidden political significance. They demand a specific kind of approach; free-floating contemplation is not appropriate to them. They stir the viewer; he feels challenged by them in a new way. At the same time picture magazines begin to put up signposts for him, right ones or wrong ones, no matter. For the first time, captions have become obligatory. And it is clear that they have an altogether different character than the title of a painting. The directives which the captions give to those looking at pictures in illustrated magazines soon become even more explicit and more imperative in the film where the meaning of each single picture appears to be prescribed by the sequence of all preceding ones.

VII

The nineteenth-century dispute as to the artistic value of painting versus photography today seems devious and confused. This does not diminish its importance, however; if anything, it underlines it. The dispute was in fact the symptom of a historical transformation the universal impact of which was not realized by either of the rivals. When the age of mechanical reproduction separated art from its basis in cult, the semblance of its autonomy disappeared forever. The resulting change in the function of art transcended the perspective of the century; for a long time it even escaped that of the twentieth century, which experienced the development of the film.

Earlier much futile thought had been devoted to the question of whether photography is an art. The primary question – whether the very invention of photography had not transformed the entire nature of art – was not raised. Soon the film theoreticians asked the same ill-considered question with regard to the film. But the difficulties which photography caused traditional aesthetics were mere child's play as compared to those raised by the film. Whence the insensitive and forced character of early theories of the film. Abel Gance, for instance, compares the film with hieroglyphs:

> Here, by a remarkable regression, we have come back to the level of expression of the Egyptians … Pictorial language has not yet matured because our eyes have not yet adjusted to it. There is as yet insufficient respect for, insufficient cult of, what it expresses.[12]

Or, in the words of Séverin-Mars:

> What art has been granted a dream more poetical and more real at the same time! Approached in this fashion the film might represent an incomparable means of expression. Only the most high-minded persons, in the most perfect and mysterious moments of their lives, should be allowed to enter its ambience.[13]

Alexandre Arnoux concludes his fantasy about the silent film with the question: 'Do not all the bold descriptions we have given amount to the definition of prayer?'[14] It is instructive to note how their desire to class the film among the 'arts' forces these theoreticians to read ritual elements into it – with a striking lack of discretion. Yet when these speculations were published, films like *L'Opinion publique* and *The Gold Rush* had already appeared. This, however, did not keep Abel Gance from adducing hieroglyphs for purposes of comparison, nor Séverin-Mars from speaking of the film as one might speak of paintings by Fra Angelico. Characteristically, even today ultra-reactionary authors give the film a similar contextual significance – if not an outright sacred one, then at least a supernatural one. Commenting on Max Reinhardt's film version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Werfel states that undoubtedly it was the sterile copying of the exterior world with its streets, interiors, railroad stations, restaurants, motorcars, and beaches which until now had obstructed the elevation of the film to the realm of art. 'The film has not yet realized its true meaning, its real possibilities … these consist in its unique faculty to express by natural means and with incomparable persuasiveness all that is fairylike, marvelous, supernatural.'[15]

VIII

The artistic performance of a stage actor is definitely presented to the public by the actor in person; that of the screen actor, however, is presented by a camera, with a twofold consequence. The camera that presents the performance of the film actor to the public need not respect the performance as an integral whole. Guided by the cameraman, the camera continually changes

its position with respect to the performance. The sequence of positional views which the editor composes from the material supplied him constitutes the completed film. It comprises certain factors of movement which are in reality those of the camera, not to mention special camera angles, close-ups, etc. Hence, the performance of the actor is subjected to a series of optical tests. This is the first consequence of the fact that the actor's performance is presented by means of a camera. Also, the film actor lacks the opportunity of the stage actor to adjust to the audience during his performance, since he does not present his performance to the audience in person. This permits the audience to take the position of a critic, without experiencing any personal contact with the actor. The audience's identification with the actor is really an identification with the camera. Consequently the audience takes the position of the camera; its approach is that of testing.[16] This is not the approach to which cult values may be exposed.

IX

For the film, what matters primarily is that the actor represents himself to the public before the camera, rather than representing someone else. One of the first to sense the actor's metamorphosis by this form of testing was Pirandello. Though his remarks on the subject in his novel *Si Gira* were limited to the negative aspects of the question and to the silent film only, this hardly impairs their validity. For in this respect, the sound film did not change anything essential. What matters is that the part is acted not for an audience but for a mechanical contrivance – in the case of the sound film, for two of them. 'The film actor,' wrote Pirandello,

> feels as if in exile – exiled not only from the stage but also from himself. With a vague sense of discomfort he feels inexplicable emptiness: his body loses its corporeality, it evaporates, it is deprived of reality, life, voice, and the noises caused by his moving about, in order to be changed into a mute image, flickering an instant on the screen, then vanishing into silence … The projector will play with his shadow before the public, and he himself must be content to play before the camera.[17]

This situation might also be characterized as follows: for the first time – and this is the effect of the film – man has to operate with his whole living person, yet forgoing its aura. For aura is tied to his presence; there can be no replica of it. The aura which, on the stage, emanates from Macbeth, cannot be separated for the spectators from that of the actor. However, the singularity of the shot in the studio is that the camera is substituted for the public. Consequently, the aura that envelops the actor vanishes, and with it the aura of the figure he portrays.

It is not surprising that it should be a dramatist such as Pirandello who, in characterizing the film, inadvertently touches on the very crisis in which we see the theater. Any thorough study proves that there is indeed no greater contrast than that of the stage play to a work of art that is completely subject to or, like the film, founded in, mechanical reproduction. Experts have long recognized that in the film 'the greatest effects are almost always obtained by "acting" as little as possible.' In 1932 Rudolf Arnheim saw 'the latest trend … in treating the actor as a stage prop chosen for its characteristics and … inserted at the proper place.'[18] With this idea something else is closely connected. The stage actor identifies himself with the character of his role. The film actor very often is denied this opportunity. His creation is by no means all of a piece; it is composed of many separate performances. Besides certain fortuitous considerations, such as cost of studio, availability of fellow players, décor, etc., there are elementary necessities of equipment that split the actor's work into a series of mountable episodes. In particular, lighting and its installation require the presentation of an event that,

on the screen, unfolds as a rapid and unified scene, in a sequence of separate shootings which may take hours at the studio; not to mention more obvious montage. Thus a jump from the window can be shot in the studio as a jump from a scaffold, and the ensuing flight, if need be, can be shot weeks later when outdoor scenes are taken. Far more paradoxical cases can easily be construed. Let us assume that an actor is supposed to be startled by a knock at the door. If his reaction is not satisfactory, the director can resort to an expedient: when the actor happens to be at the studio again he has a shot fired behind him without his being forewarned of it. The frightened reaction can be shot now and be cut into the screen version. Nothing more strikingly shows that art has left the realm of the 'beautiful semblance' which, so far, had been taken to be the only sphere where art could thrive.

X

The feeling of strangeness that overcomes the actor before the camera, as Pirandello describes it, is basically of the same kind as the estrangement felt before one's own image in the mirror. But now the reflected image has become separable, transportable. And where is it transported? Before the public.[19] Never for a moment does the screen actor cease to be conscious of this fact. While facing the camera he knows that ultimately he will face the public, the consumers who constitute the market. This market, where he offers not only his labour but also his whole self, his heart and soul, is beyond his reach. During the shooting he has as little contact with it as any article made in a factory. This may contribute to that oppression, that new anxiety which, according to Pirandello, grips the actor before the camera. The film responds to the shriveling of the aura with an artificial build-up of the 'personality' outside the studio. The cult of the movie star, fostered by the money of the film industry, preserves not the unique aura of the person but the 'spell of the personality,' the phony spell of a commodity. So long as the movie-makers' capital sets the fashion, as a rule no other revolutionary merit can be accredited to today's film than the promotion of a revolutionary criticism of traditional concepts of art. We do not deny that in some cases today's films can also promote revolutionary criticism of social conditions, even of the distribution of property. However, our present study is no more specifically concerned with this than is the film production of Western Europe.

It is inherent in the technique of the film as well as that of sports that everybody who witnesses its accomplishments is somewhat of an expert. This is obvious to anyone listening to a group of newspaper boys leaning on their bicycles and discussing the outcome of a bicycle race. It is not for nothing that newspaper publishers arrange races for their delivery boys. These arouse great interest among the participants, for the victor has an opportunity to rise from delivery boy to professional racer. Similarly, the newsreel offers everyone the opportunity to rise from passer-by to movie extra. In this way any man might even find himself part of a work of art, as witness Vertoff's *Three Songs about Lenin* or Ivens' *Borinage*. Any man today can lay claim to being filmed. This claim can best be elucidated by a comparative look at the historical situation of contemporary literature.

For centuries a small number of writers were confronted by many thousands of readers. This changed toward the end of the last century. With the increasing extension of the press, which kept placing new political, religious, scientific, professional, and local organs before the readers, an increasing number of readers became writers – at first, occasional ones. It began with the daily press opening to its readers space for 'letters to the editor.' And today there is hardly a gainfully employed European who could not, in principle, find an opportunity to publish somewhere or other comments on his work, grievances, documentary reports, or that sort of thing. Thus, the distinction between author and public is about to lose its basic character. The difference becomes merely functional; it may vary from case to case. At any moment

the reader is ready to turn into a writer. As expert, which he had to become willy-nilly in an extremely specialized work process, even if only in some minor respect, the reader gains access to authorship. In the Soviet Union work itself is given a voice. To present it verbally is part of a man's ability to perform the work. Literary license is now founded on polytechnic rather than specialized training and thus becomes common property.[20]

All this can easily be applied to the film, where transitions that in literature took centuries have come about in a decade. In cinematic practice, particularly in Russia, this change-over has partially become established reality. Some of the players whom we meet in Russian films are not actors in our sense but people who portray themselves – and primarily in their own work process. In Western Europe the capitalistic exploitation of the film denies consideration to modern man's legitimate claim to being reproduced. Under these circumstances the film industry is trying hard to spur the interest of the masses through illusion-promoting spectacles and dubious speculations.

XI

The shooting of a film, especially of a sound film, affords a spectacle unimaginable anywhere at any time before this. It presents a process in which it is impossible to assign to a spectator a viewpoint which would exclude from the actual scene such extraneous accessories as camera equipment, lighting machinery, staff assistants, etc. – unless his eye were on a line parallel with the lens. This circumstance, more than any other, renders superficial and insignificant any possible similarity between a scene in the studio and one on the stage. In the theater one is well aware of the place from which the play cannot immediately be detected as illusionary. There is no such place for the movie scene that is being shot. Its illusionary nature is that of the second degree, the result of cutting. That is to say, in the studio the mechanical equipment has penetrated so deeply into reality that its pure aspect freed from the foreign substance of equipment is the result of a special procedure, namely, the shooting by the specially adjusted camera and the mounting of the shot together with other similar ones. The equipment-free aspect of reality here has become the height of artifice; the sight of immediate reality has become an orchid in the land of technology.

Even more revealing is the comparison of these circumstances, which differ so much from those of the theater, with the situation in painting. Here the question is: How does the cameraman compare with the painter? To answer this we take recourse to an analogy with a surgical operation. The surgeon represents the polar opposite of the magician. The magician heals a sick person by the laying on of hands; the surgeon cuts into the patient's body. The magician maintains the natural distance between the patient and himself; though he reduces it very slightly by the laying on of hands, he greatly increases it by virtue of his authority. The surgeon does exactly the reverse; he greatly diminishes the distance between himself and the patient by penetrating into the patient's body, and increases it but little by the caution with which his hand moves among the organs. In short, in contrast to the magician – who is still hidden in the medical practitioner – the surgeon at the decisive moment abstains from facing the patient man to man; rather, it is through the operation that he penetrates into him.

Magician and surgeon compare to painter and cameraman. The painter maintains in his work a natural distance from reality, the cameraman penetrates deeply into its web.[21] There is a tremendous difference between the pictures they obtain. That of the painter is a total one, that of the cameraman consists of multiple fragments which are assembled under a new law. Thus, for contemporary man the representation of reality by the film is incomparably more significant than that of the painter, since it offers, precisely because of the thoroughgoing permeation of reality with mechanical equipment, an aspect of reality which is free of all equipment. And that is what one is entitled to ask from a work of art.

XII

Mechanical reproduction of art changes the reaction of the masses toward art. The reactionary attitude toward a Picasso painting changes into the progressive reaction toward a Chaplin movie. The progressive reaction is characterized by the direct, intimate fusion of visual and emotional enjoyment with the orientation of the expert. Such fusion is of great social significance. The greater the decrease in the social significance of an art form, the sharper the distinction between criticism and enjoyment by the public. The conventional is uncritically enjoyed, and the truly new is criticized with aversion. With regard to the screen, the critical and the receptive attitudes of the public coincide. The decisive reason for this is that individual reactions are predetermined by the mass audience response they are about to produce, and this is nowhere more pronounced than in the film. The moment these responses become manifest they control each other. Again, the comparison with painting is fruitful. A painting has always had an excellent chance to be viewed by one person or by a few. The simultaneous contemplation of paintings by a large public, such as developed in the nineteenth century, is an early symptom of the crisis of painting, a crisis which was by no means occasioned exclusively by photography but rather in a relatively independent manner by the appeal of art works to the masses.

Painting simply is in no position to present an object for simultaneous collective experience, as it was possible for architecture at all times, for the epic poem in the past, and for the movie today. Although this circumstance in itself should not lead one to conclusions about the social role of painting, it does constitute a serious threat as soon as painting, under special conditions and, as it were, against its nature, is confronted directly by the masses. In the churches and monasteries of the Middle Ages and at the princely courts up to the end of the eighteenth century, a collective reception of paintings did not occur simultaneously, but by graduated and hierarchized mediation. The change that has come about is an expression of the particular conflict in which painting was implicated by the mechanical reproducibility of paintings. Although paintings began to be publicly exhibited in galleries and salons, there was no way for the masses to organize and control themselves in their reception.[22] Thus the same public which responds in a progressive manner toward a grotesque film is bound to respond in a reactionary manner to surrealism.

XIII

The characteristics of the film lie not only in the manner in which man presents himself to mechanical equipment but also in the manner in which, by means of this apparatus, man can represent his environment. A glance at occupational psychology illustrates the testing capacity of the equipment. Psychoanalysis illustrates it in a different perspective. The film has enriched our field of perception with methods which can be illustrated by those of Freudian theory. Fifty years ago, a slip of the tongue passed more or less unnoticed. Only exceptionally may such a slip have revealed dimensions of depth in a conversation which had seemed to be taking its course on the surface. Since the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* things have changed. This book isolated and made analyzable things which had heretofore floated along unnoticed in the broad stream of perception. For the entire spectrum of optical, and now also acoustical, perception the film has brought about a similar deepening of apperception. It is only an obverse of this fact that behavior items shown in a movie can be analyzed much more precisely and from more points of view than those presented on paintings or on the stage. As compared with painting, filmed behavior lends itself more readily to analysis because of its incomparably more precise statements of the situation. In comparison with the stage scene, the filmed behavior item lends itself more readily to analysis because it can be isolated more easily. This circumstance derives its chief importance from its tendency to promote the mutual penetration of art and science. Actually,

of a screened behavior item which is neatly brought out in a certain situation, like a muscle of a body, it is difficult to say which is more fascinating, its artistic value or its value for science. To demonstrate the identity of the artistic and scientific uses of photography which heretofore usually were separated will be one of the revolutionary functions of the film.[23]

By close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera, the film, on the one hand, extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action. Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go traveling. With the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended. The enlargement of a snapshot does not simply render more precise what in any case was visible, though unclear: it reveals entirely new structural formations of the subject. So, too, slow motion not only presents familiar qualities of movement but reveals in them entirely unknown ones 'which, far from looking like retarded rapid movements, give the effect of singularly gliding, floating, supernatural motions.'[24] Evidently a different nature opens itself to the camera than opens to the naked eye – if only because an unconsciously penetrated space is substituted for a space consciously explored by man. Even if one has a general knowledge of the way people walk, one knows nothing of a person's posture during the fractional second of a stride. The act of reaching for a lighter or a spoon is familiar routine, yet we hardly know what really goes on between hand and metal, not to mention how this fluctuates with our moods. Here the camera intervenes with the resources of its lowerings and liftings, its interruptions and isolations, its extensions and accelerations, its enlargements and reductions. The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses.

XIV

One of the foremost tasks of art has always been the creation of a demand which could be fully satisfied only later.[25] The history of every art form shows critical epochs in which a certain art form aspires to effects which could be fully obtained only with a changed technical standard, that is to say, in a new art form. The extravagances and crudities of art which thus appear, particularly in the so-called decadent epochs, actually arise from the nucleus of its richest historical energies. In recent years, such barbarisms were abundant in Dadaism. It is only now that its impulse becomes discernible: Dadaism attempted to create by pictorial – and literary – means the effects which the public today seeks in the film.

Every fundamentally new, pioneering creation of demands will carry beyond its goal. Dadaism did so to the extent that it sacrificed the market values which are so characteristic of the film in favor of higher ambitions – though of course it was not conscious of such intentions, as here described. The Dadaists attached much less importance to the sales value of their work than to its uselessness for contemplative immersion. The studied degradation of their material was not the least of their means to achieve this uselessness. Their poems are 'word salad' containing obscenities and every imaginable waste product of language. The same is true of their paintings, on which they mounted buttons and tickets. What they intended and achieved was a relentless destruction of the aura of their creations, which they branded as reproductions with the very means of production. Before a painting of Arp's or a poem by August Stramm it is impossible to take time for contemplation and evaluation as one would before a canvas of Derain's or a poem by Rilke. In the decline of middle-class society, contemplation became a school for asocial behavior; it was countered by distraction as a variant of social conduct.[26] Dadaistic activities

actually assured a rather vehement distraction by making works of art the center of scandal. One requirement was foremost: to outrage the public.

From an alluring appearance or persuasive structure of sound the work of art of the Dadaists became an instrument of ballistics. It hit the spectator like a bullet, it happened to him, thus acquiring a tactile quality. It promoted a demand for the film, the distracting element of which is also primarily tactile, being based on changes of place and focus which periodically assail the spectator. Let us compare the screen on which a film unfolds with the canvas of a painting. The painting invites the spectator to contemplation; before it the spectator can abandon himself to his associations. Before the movie frame he cannot do so. No sooner has his eye grasped a scene than it is already changed. It cannot be arrested. Duhamel, who detests the film and knows nothing of its significance, though something of its structure, notes this circumstance as follows: 'I can no longer think what I want to think. My thoughts have been replaced by moving images.'[27] The spectator's process of association in view of these images is indeed interrupted by their constant, sudden change. This constitutes the shock effect of the film, which, like all shocks, should be cushioned by heightened presence of mind.[28] By means of its technical structure, the film has taken the physical shock effect out of the wrappers in which Dadaism had, as it were, kept it inside the moral shock effect.[29]

XV

The mass is a matrix from which all traditional behavior toward works of art issues today in a new form. Quantity has been transmuted into quality. The greatly increased mass of participants has produced a change in the mode of participation. The fact that the new mode of participation first appeared in a disreputable form must not confuse the spectator. Yet some people have launched spirited attacks against precisely this superficial aspect. Among these, Duhamel has expressed himself in the most radical manner. What he objects to most is the kind of participation which the movie elicits from the masses. Duhamel calls the movie

> a pastime for helots, a diversion for uneducated, wretched, worn-out creatures who are consumed by their worries … a spectacle which requires no concentration and presupposes no intelligence … which kindles no light in the heart and awakens no hope other than the ridiculous one of someday becoming a 'star' in Los Angeles.[30]

Clearly, this is at bottom the same ancient lament that the masses seek distraction whereas art demands concentration from the spectator. That is a commonplace. The question remains whether it provides a platform for the analysis of the film. A closer look is needed here. Distraction and concentration form polar opposites which may be stated as follows: A man who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it. He enters into this work of art the way legend tells of the Chinese painter when he viewed his finished painting. In contrast, the distracted mass absorbs the work of art. This is most obvious with regard to buildings. Architecture has always represented the prototype of a work of art the reception of which is consummated by a collectivity in a state of distraction. The laws of its reception are most instructive.

Buildings have been man's companions since primeval times. Many art forms have developed and perished. Tragedy begins with the Greeks, is extinguished with them, and after centuries its 'rules' only are revived. The epic poem, which had its origin in the youth of nations, expires in Europe at the end of the Renaissance. Panel painting is a creation of the Middle Ages, and nothing guarantees its uninterrupted existence. But the human need for shelter is lasting. Architecture has never been idle. Its history is more ancient than that of any other art, and its claim to being a living force has significance in every attempt to comprehend the relationship of the masses to art.

Buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception – or rather, by touch and sight. Such appropriation cannot be understood in terms of the attentive concentration of a tourist before a famous building. On the tactile side there is no counterpart to contemplation on the optical side. Tactile appropriation is accomplished not so much by attention as by habit. As regards architecture, habit determines to a large extent even optical reception. The latter, too, occurs much less through rapt attention than by noticing the object in incidental fashion. This mode of appropriation, developed with reference to architecture, in certain circumstances acquires canonical value. For the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at the turning points of history cannot be solved by optical means, that is, by contemplation, alone. They are mastered gradually by habit, under the guidance of tactile appropriation.

The distracted person, too, can form habits. More, the ability to master certain tasks in a state of distraction proves that their solution has become a matter of habit. Distraction as provided by art presents a covert control of the extent to which new tasks have become soluble by apperception. Since, moreover, individuals are tempted to avoid such tasks, art will tackle the most difficult and most important ones where it is able to mobilize the masses. Today it does so in the film. Reception in a state of distraction, which is increasing noticeably in all fields of art and is symptomatic of profound changes in apperception, finds in the film its true means of exercise. The film with its shock effect meets this mode of reception halfway. The film makes the cult value recede into the background not only by putting the public in the position of the critic, but also by the fact that at the movies this position requires no attention. The public is an examiner, but an absent-minded one.

Epilogue

The growing proletarianization of modern man and the increasing formation of masses are two aspects of the same process. Fascism attempts to organize the newly created proletarian masses without affecting the property structure which the masses strive to eliminate. Fascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves.[31] The masses have a right to change property relations; Fascism seeks to give them an expression while preserving property. The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life. The violation of the masses, whom Fascism, with its *Führer* cult, forces to their knees, has its counterpart in the violation of an apparatus which is pressed into the production of ritual values.

All efforts to render politics aesthetic culminate in one thing: war. War and war only can set a goal for mass movements on the largest scale while respecting the traditional property system. This is the political formula for the situation. The technological formula may be stated as follows: Only war makes it possible to mobilize all of today's technical resources while maintaining the property system. It goes without saying that the Fascist apotheosis of war does not employ such arguments. Still, Marinetti says in his manifesto on the Ethiopian colonial war:

> For twenty-seven years we Futurists have rebelled against the branding of war as antiaesthetic … Accordingly we state: … War is beautiful because it establishes man's dominion over the subjugated machinery by means of gas masks, terrifying megaphones, flame throwers, and small tanks. War is beautiful because it initiates the dreamt-of metalization of the human body. War is beautiful because it enriches a flowering meadow with the fiery orchids of machine guns. War is beautiful because it combines the gunfire, the cannonades, the cease-fire, the scents, and the stench of putrefaction into a symphony. War is beautiful because it creates new architecture, like that of the big tanks, the geometrical formation flights, the smoke spirals from burning villages, and many others … Poets and artists of Futurism! … remember these principles of an aesthetics of war so that your struggle for a new literature and a new graphic art … may be illumined by them!

This manifesto has the virtue of clarity. Its formulations deserve to be accepted by dialecticians. To the latter, the aesthetics of today's war appears as follows: If the natural utilization of productive forces is impeded by the property system, the increase in technical devices, in speed, and in the sources of energy will press for an unnatural utilization, and this is found in war. The destructiveness of war furnishes proof that society has not been mature enough to incorporate technology as its organ, that technology has not been sufficiently developed to cope with the elemental forces of society. The horrible features of imperialistic warfare are attributable to the discrepancy between the tremendous means of production and their inadequate utilization in the process of production – in other words, to unemployment and the lack of markets. Imperialistic war is a rebellion of technology which collects, in the form of 'human material,' the claims to which society has denied its natural material. Instead of draining rivers, society directs a human stream into a bed of trenches; instead of dropping seeds from airplanes, it drops incendiary bombs over cities; and through gas warfare the aura is abolished in a new way.

'*Fiat ars – pereat mundus*,' says Fascism, and, as Marinetti admits, expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology. This is evidently the consummation of '*l'art pour l'art*.' Mankind, which in Homer's time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now is one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art.

Translated by Harry Zohn

Notes

1 Quoted from Paul Valéry, *Aesthetics*, 'The Conquest of Ubiquity,' translated by Ralph Manheim, New York: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series, 1964, p. 225.

2 Of course, the history of a work of art encompasses more than this. The history of the *Mona Lisa*, for instance, encompasses the kind and number of its copies made in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

3 Precisely because authenticity is not reproducible, the intensive penetration of certain (mechanical) processes of reproduction was instrumental in differentiating and grading authenticity. To develop such differentiations was an important function of the trade in works of art. The invention of the woodcut may be said to have struck at the root of the quality of authenticity even before its late flowering. To be sure, at the time of its origin a medieval picture of the Madonna could not yet be said to be 'authentic.' It became 'authentic' only during the succeeding centuries and perhaps most strikingly so during the last one.

4 The poorest provincial staging of *Faust* is superior to a Faust film in that, ideally, it competes with the first performance at Weimar. Before the screen it is unprofitable to remember traditional contents which might come to mind before the stage – for instance, that Goethe's friend Johann Heinrich Merck is hidden in Mephisto, and the like.

5 Abel Gance, 'Le Temps de l'image est venu,' *L'Art cinématographique*, vol. 2, Paris, 1927, pp. 94f.

6 To satisfy the human interest of the masses may mean to have one's social function removed from the field of vision. Nothing guarantees that a portraitist of today, when painting a famous surgeon at the breakfast table in the midst of his family, depicts his social function more precisely than a painter of the seventeenth century who portrayed his medical doctors as representing this profession, like Rembrandt in his *Anatomy Lesson*.

7 The definition of the aura as a 'unique phenomenon of a distance however close it may be' represents nothing but the formulation of the cult value of the work of art in categories of space and time perception. Distance is the opposite of closeness. The essentially distant object is the unapproachable one. Unapproachability is indeed a

major quality of the cult image. True to its nature, it remains 'distant, however close it may be.' The closeness which one may gain from its subject matter does not impair the distance which it retains in its appearance.

8 To the extent to which the cult value of the painting is secularized the ideas of its fundamental uniqueness lose distinctness. In the imagination of the beholder the uniqueness of the phenomena which hold sway in the cult image is more and more displaced by the empirical uniqueness of the creator or of his creative achievement. To be sure, never completely so; the concept of authenticity always transcends mere genuineness. (This is particularly apparent in the collector who always retains some traces of the fetishist and who, by owning the work of art, shares in its ritual power.) Nevertheless, the function of the concept of authenticity remains determinate in the evaluation of art; with the secularization of art, authenticity displaces the cult value of the work.

9 In the case of films, mechanical reproduction is not, as with literature and painting, an external condition for mass distribution. Mechanical reproduction is inherent in the very technique of film production. This technique not only permits in the most direct way but virtually causes mass distribution. It enforces distribution because the production of a film is so expensive that an individual who, for instance, might afford to buy a painting no longer can afford to buy a film. In 1927 it was calculated that a major film, in order to pay its way, had to reach an audience of nine million. With the sound film, to be sure, a setback in its international distribution occurred at first: audiences became limited by language barriers. This coincided with the Fascist emphasis on national interests. It is more important to focus on this connection with Fascism than on this setback, which was soon minimized by synchronization. The simultaneity of both phenomena is attributable to the depression. The same disturbances which, on a larger scale, led to an attempt to maintain the existing property structure by sheer force led the endangered film capital to speed up the development of the sound film. The introduction of the sound film brought about a temporary relief, not only because it again brought the masses into the theaters but also because it merged new capital from the electrical industry with that of the film industry. Thus, viewed from the outside, the sound film promoted national interests, but seen from the inside it helped to internationalize film production even more than previously.

10 This polarity cannot come into its own in the aesthetics of Idealism. Its idea of beauty comprises these polar opposites without differentiating between them and consequently excludes their polarity. Yet in Hegel this polarity announces itself as clearly as possible within the limits of Idealism. We quote from his *Philosophy of History*:

> Images were known of old. Piety at an early time required them for worship, but it could do without *beautiful* images. These might even be disturbing. In every beautiful painting there is also something nonspiritual, merely external, but its spirit speaks to man through its beauty. Worshipping, conversely, is concerned with the work as an object, for it is but a spiritless stupor of the soul … Fine art has arisen … in the church … although it has already gone beyond its principle as art.

Likewise, the following passage from *The Philosophy of Fine Art* indicates that Hegel sensed a problem here.

> We are beyond the stage of reverence for works of art as divine and objects deserving our worship. The impression they produce is one of a more reflective kind, and the emotions they arouse require a higher test.
>
> G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans., with notes, by F.P.B. Osmaston, London, 1920, vol. 1, p. 12.

The transition from the first kind of artistic reception to the second characterizes the history of artistic reception in general. Apart from that, a certain oscillation between these two polar modes of reception can be demonstrated for each work of art. Take the Sistine Madonna. Since Hubert Grimme's research it has been known that the Madonna originally was painted for the purpose of exhibition. Grimme's research was inspired by the question: What is the purpose of the molding in the foreground of the painting which the two cupids lean upon? How, Grimme asked further, did Raphael come to furnish the sky with two draperies? Research proved that the Madonna had been commissioned for the public lying-in-state of

Pope Sixtus. The Popes lay in state in a certain side chapel of St. Peter's. On that occasion Raphael's picture had been fastened in a nichelike background of the chapel, supported by the coffin. In this picture Raphael portrays the Madonna approaching the papal coffin in clouds from the background of the niche, which was demarcated by green drapes. At the obsequies of Sixtus a pre-eminent exhibition value of Raphael's picture was taken advantage of. Some time later it was placed on the high altar in the church of the Black Friars at Piacenza. The reason for this exile is to be found in the Roman rites which forbid the use of paintings exhibited at obsequies as cult objects on the high altar. This regulation devalued Raphael's picture to some degree. In order to obtain an adequate price nevertheless, the Papal See resolved to add to the bargain the tacit toleration of the picture above the high altar. To avoid attention the picture was given to the monks of the far-off provincial town.

11 Bertolt Brecht, on a different level, engaged in analogous reflections:

> If the concept of 'work of art' can no longer be applied to the thing that emerges once the work is transformed into a commodity, we have to eliminate this concept with cautious care but without fear, lest we liquidate the function of the very thing as well. For it has to go through this phase without mental reservation, and not as noncommittal deviation from the straight path; rather, what happens here with the work of art will change it fundamentally and erase its past to such an extent that should the old concept be taken up again – and it will, why not? – it will no longer stir any memory of the thing it once designated.

12 Abel Gance, 'Le Temps de l'image', pp. 100–01.

13 Séverin-Mars, quoted by Abel Gance, ibid., p. 100.

14 Alexandre Arnoux, *Cinéma pris*, 1929, p. 28.

15 Franz Werfel, 'Ein Sommernachtstraum, ein Film von Shakespeare und Reinhardt,' *Neues Wiener Journal*, cited in *Lu* 15, November 1935.

16 'The film … provides – or could provide – useful insight into the details of human actions … Character is never used as a source of motivation; the inner life of the persons never supplies the principal cause of the plot and seldom is its main result' (Bertolt Brecht, *Versuche*, 'Der Dreigroschenprozess,' p. 268). The expansion of the field of the testable which mechanical equipment brings about for the actor corresponds to the extraordinary expansion of the field of the testable brought about for the individual through economic conditions. Thus, vocational aptitude tests become constantly more important. What matters in these tests are segmental performances of the individual. The film shot and the vocational aptitude test are taken before a committee of experts. The camera director in the studio occupies a place identical with that of the examiner during aptitude tests.

17 Luigi Pirandello, *Si Gira*, quoted by Léon Pierre-Quint, 'Signification du cinéma,' *L'Art cinématographique*, pp. 14–15.

18 Rudolf Arnheim, *Film als Kunst*, Berlin, 1932, pp. 176f. In this context certain seemingly unimportant details in which the film director deviates from stage practices gain in interest. Such is the attempt to let the actor play without make-up, as made among others by Dreyer in his *Jeanne d'Arc*. Dreyer spent months seeking the forty actors who constitute the Inquisitors' tribunal. The search for these actors resembled that for stage properties that are hard to come by. Dreyer made every effort to avoid resemblances of age, build, and physiognomy. If the actor thus becomes a stage property, this latter, on the other hand, frequently functions as actor. At least it is not unusual for the film to assign a role to the stage property. Instead of choosing at random from a great wealth of examples, let us concentrate on a particularly convincing one. A clock that is working will always be a disturbance on the stage. There it cannot be permitted its function of measuring time. Even in a naturalistic play, astronomical time would clash with theatrical time. Under these circumstances it is highly revealing that the film can, whenever appropriate, use time as measured by a clock. From this more than from many other touches it may clearly be recognized that under certain circumstances each and every prop in a film may assume important functions. From here it is but one step to Pudovkin's statement that 'the playing of an actor which is connected with an object and is built around it … is always one of the strongest methods of

cinematic construction' (W. Pudovkin, *Filmregie und Filmmanuskript*, Berlin, 1928, p. 126). The film is the first art form capable of demonstrating how matter plays tricks on man. Hence, films can be an excellent means of materialistic representation.

19 The change noted here in the method of exhibition caused by mechanical reproduction applies to politics as well. The present crisis of the bourgeois democracies comprises a crisis of the conditions which determine the public presentation of the rulers. Democracies exhibit a member of government directly and personally before the nation's representatives. Parliament is his public. Since the innovations of camera and recording equipment make it possible for the orator to become audible and visible to an unlimited number of persons, the presentation of the man of politics before camera and recording equipment becomes paramount. Parliaments, as much as theaters, are deserted. Radio and film not only affect the function of the professional actor but likewise the function of those who also exhibit themselves before this mechanical equipment, those who govern. Though their tasks may be different, the change affects equally the actor and the ruler. The trend is toward establishing controllable and transferable skills under certain social conditions. This results in a new selection, a selection before the equipment from which the star and the dictator emerge victorious.

20 The privileged character of the respective techniques is lost. Aldous Huxley writes:

> Advances in technology have led … to vulgarity … Process reproduction and the rotary press have made possible the indefinite multiplication of writing and pictures. Universal education and relatively high wages have created an enormous public who know how to read and can afford to buy reading and pictorial matter. A great industry has been called into existence in order to supply these commodities. Now, artistic talent is a very rare phenomenon; whence it follows … that, at every epoch and in all countries, most art has been bad. But the proportion of trash in the total artistic output is greater now than at any other period. That it must be so is a matter of simple arithmetic. The population of Western Europe has a little more than doubled during the last century. But the amount of reading – and seeing – matter has increased, I should imagine, at least twenty and possibly fifty or even a hundred times. If there were n men of talent in a population of x millions, there will presumably be 2n men of talent among 2x millions. The situation may be summed up thus. For every page of print and pictures published a century ago, twenty or perhaps even a hundred pages are published today. But for every man of talent then living, there are now only two men of talent. It may be of course that, thanks to universal education, many potential talents which in the past would have been stillborn are now enabled to realize themselves. Let us assume, then, that there are now three or even four men of talent to every one of earlier times. It still remains true to say that the consumption of reading – and seeing – matter has far outstripped the natural production of gifted writers and draughtsmen. It is the same with hearing-matter. Prosperity, the gramophone and the radio have created an audience of hearers who consume an amount of hearing-matter that has increased out of all proportion to the increase of population and the consequent natural increase of talented musicians. It follows from all this that in all the arts the output of trash is both absolutely and relatively greater than it was in the past; and that it must remain greater for just so long as the world continues to consume the present inordinate quantities of reading-matter, seeing-matter, and hearing-matter.
>
> (Aldous Huxley, *Beyond the Mexique Bay. A Traveller's Journal*, London, 1949, pp. 274ff. First published in 1934)

This mode of observation is obviously not progressive.

21 The boldness of the cameraman is indeed comparable to that of the surgeon. Luc Durtain lists among specific technical sleights of hand those

> which are required in surgery in the case of certain difficult operations. I choose as an example a case from oto-rhinolaryngology; … the so-called endonasal perspective procedure; or I refer to the acrobatic tricks of larynx surgery which have to be performed following the reversed picture in the laryngoscope. I might also speak of ear surgery which suggests the precision work of watchmakers. What range of the most subtle muscular acrobatics is required from the man who wants to repair or

> save the human body! We have only to think of the couching of a cataract where there is virtually a debate of steel with nearly fluid tissue, or of the major abdominal operations (laparotomy).
>
> (Luc Durtain, *op. cit.*)

[*Editor*: although this note refers to a previous citation, there is in fact no reference giving the bibliographical details either in Zohn's translation or in the collection, edited by Hannah Arendt, where the translation appears.]

22 This mode of observation may seem crude, but as the great theoretician Leonardo has shown, crude modes of observation may at times be usefully adduced. Leonardo compares painting and music as follows:

> Painting is superior to music because, unlike unfortunate music, it does not have to die as soon as it is born … Music which is consumed in the very act of its birth is inferior to painting which the use of varnish has rendered eternal.
>
> (Trattato I, 29)

23 Renaissance painting offers a revealing analogy to this situation. The incomparable development of this art and its significance rested not least on the integration of a number of new sciences, or at least of new scientific data. Renaissance painting made use of anatomy and perspective, of mathematics, meteorology, and chromatology. Valéry writes:

> What could be further from us than the strange claim of a Leonardo to whom painting was a supreme goal and the ultimate demonstration of knowledge? Leonardo was convinced that painting demanded universal knowledge, and he did not even shrink from a theoretical analysis which to us is stunning because of its very depth and precision.
>
> (Paul Valéry, *Pièces sur l'art*, 'Autour de Corot,' Paris, p. 191)

24 Rudolf Arnheim, *Film als Kunst*, p. 138.

25 'The work of art,' says André Breton, 'is valuable only in so far as it is vibrated by the reflexes of the future.' Indeed, every developed art form intersects three lines of development. Technology works toward a certain form of art. Before the advent of the film there were photo booklets with pictures which flitted by the onlooker upon pressure of the thumb, thus portraying a boxing bout or a tennis match. Then there were the slot machines in bazaars; their picture sequences were produced by the turning of a crank.

Secondly, the traditional art forms in certain phases of their development strenuously work toward effects which later are effortlessly attained by the new ones. Before the rise of the movie the Dadaists' performances tried to create an audience reaction which Chaplin later evoked in a more natural way.

Thirdly, unspectacular social changes often promote a change in receptivity which will benefit the new art form. Before the movie had begun to create its public, pictures that were no longer immobile captivated an assembled audience in the so-called *Kaiserpanorama*. Here the public assembled before a screen into which stereoscopes were mounted, one to each beholder. By a mechanical process individual pictures appeared briefly before the stereoscopes, then made way for others. Edison still had to use similar devices in presenting the first movie strip before the film screen and projection were known. This strip was presented to a small public which stared into the apparatus in which the succession of pictures was reeling off. Incidentally, the institution of the *Kaiserpanorama* shows very clearly a dialectic of the development. Shortly before the movie turned the reception of pictures into a collective one, the individual viewing of pictures in these swiftly outmoded establishments came into play once more with an intensity comparable to that of the ancient priest beholding the statue of a divinity in the cella.

26 The theological archetype of this contemplation is the awareness of being alone with one's God. Such awareness, in the heyday of the bourgeoisie, went to strengthen the freedom to shake off clerical tutelage. During the decline of the bourgeoisie this awareness had to take into account the hidden tendency to withdraw from public affairs those forces which the individual draws upon in his communion with God.

27 Georges Duhamel, *Scènes de la vie future*, Paris, 1930, p. 52.

28 The film is the art form that is in keeping with the increased threat to his life which modern man has to face. Man's need to expose himself to shock effects is his adjustment to the dangers threatening him.

The film corresponds to profound changes in the apperceptive apparatus – changes that are experienced on an individual scale by the man in the street in big-city traffic, on a historical scale by every present-day citizen.

29 As for Dadaism, insights important for Cubism and Futurism are to be gained from the movie. Both appear as deficient attempts of art to accommodate the pervasion of reality by the apparatus. In contrast to the film, these schools did not try to use the apparatus as such for the artistic presentation of reality, but aimed at some sort of alloy in the joint presentation of reality and apparatus. In Cubism, the premonition that this apparatus will be structurally based on optics plays a dominant part; in Futurism, it is the premonition of the effects of this apparatus which are brought out by the rapid sequence of the film strip.

30 Duhamel, *Scènes de la vie future*, p. 58.

31 One technical feature is significant here, especially with regard to newsreels, the propagandist importance of which can hardly be overestimated. Mass reproduction is aided especially by the reproduction of masses. In big parades and monster rallies, in sports events, and in war, all of which nowadays are captured by camera and sound recording, the masses are brought face to face with themselves. This process, whose significance need not be stressed, is intimately connected with the development of the techniques of reproduction and photography. Mass movements are usually discerned more clearly by a camera than by the naked eye. A bird's-eye view best captures gatherings of hundreds of thousands. And even though such a view may be as accessible to the human eye as it is to the camera, the image received by the eye cannot be enlarged the way a negative is enlarged. This means that mass movements, including war, constitute a form of human behavior which particularly favors mechanical equipment.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Walter Benjamin in English

The Arcades Project, trans. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism, trans. H. Zohn and Q. Hoare, London: Verso, 1983.

The Complete Correspondence 1928–1940 (with T.W. Adorno), ed. H. Lonitz, trans. N. Walker, Cambridge: Polity, 1999.

The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin, 1910–1940, eds G. Scholem and T.W. Adorno, trans. M.R. Jacobsen and E.M. Jacobsen, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994.

Illuminations, ed. H. Arendt, trans. H. Zohn, New York: Schocken, 1969.

Moscow Diary, ed. G. Smith, trans. R. Sieburth, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986.

On Hashish, ed. H. Eiland, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006.

One-Way Street and Other Writings, trans. E. Jephcott and K. Shorter, London: Verso, 1985.

The Origin of German Tragic Drama, trans. J. Osborne, London: Verso, 1985.

Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings, trans. E. Jephcott, New York: Schocken Books, 1986.

Selected Writings, Vol. 1: 1913–1926, eds M. Bullock and M.W. Jennings, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996.

Selected Writings, Vol. 2 Part 1: 1927–1930, eds M.W. Jennings, H. Eiland, and G. Smith, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005.

Selected Writings, Vol. 2 Part 2: 1931–1934, eds M.W. Jennings, H. Eiland, and G. Smith, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005.

Selected Writings, Vol. 3: 1935–1938, eds H. Eiland and M.W. Jennings, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Selected Writings, Vol. 4: 1938–1940, eds H. Eiland and M.W. Jennings, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Understanding Brecht, trans. A. Bostock, London: Verso, 1973.

Walter Benjamin's Archive, eds U. Marx, G. Schwarz, M. Schwarz, and E. Wizisla, trans. E. Leslie, London: Verso, 2007.

The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media, eds M.W. Jennings, B. Doherty, and T.Y. Levin, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Further reading

For introductions to Benjamin's thought, see Ferris (2008), Gilloch (2001), and Steiner (2010). Appraisals of his work on art, aura, and technology are given by A. Benjamin (2005), Donohoe (2008), Duttlinger (2008), Knizek (1993), Levin (1988), Löwy (1996), Nielsen (2007), Olivier (1996), Petersson and Steinskog (2005), Richter (2002), Rochlitz (1998), and Todd (1984), while the relation between aesthetics and politics is explored by Eagleton (2009), Gumbrecht and Marrinan (2003), Koepnick (1999), Miller (2008), and Weinbaum (2007). The importance of the image and visual experience for Benjamin is considered by Caygill (1997), and Weigel (1996), while Kirkkopelto (2006) and Nägele (1991) study his thought in the context of theatre. The Arcades Project (*Passagenwerk*) is assessed by Buck Morss (1991), Hanssen (2006), and McRobbie (1992). A range of critical perspectives is collected in Ferris (2004).

A. Benjamin (ed.), *Walter Benjamin and Art*, London: Continuum, 2005.
S. Buck Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991.
H. Caygill, *Walter Benjamin: The Colour of Experience*, London: Routledge, 1997.
J. Donohoe, 'The place of tradition: Heidegger and Benjamin on technology and art', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 2008, vol. 39, pp. 260–74.
C. Duttlinger, 'Imaginary encounters: Walter Benjamin and the aura of photography', *Poetics Today*, 2008, vol. 29, pp. 79–101.
T. Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin: or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*, London: Verso, 2009.
D. Ferris, *The Cambridge Introduction to Walter Benjamin*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
D.S. Ferris (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
G. Gilloch, *Walter Benjamin: Critical Constellations*, Cambridge: Polity, 2001.
H.U. Gumbrecht and M. Marrinan (eds), *Mapping Benjamin: The Work of Art in the Digital Age*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
B. Hanssen, *Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, London: Continuum, 2006.
E. Kirkkopelto, 'Prosaic stage: reflections on the theatre of Walter Benjamin', *Acta Philosophica Fennica*, 2006, vol. 79, pp. 115–37.
I. Knizek, 'Walter Benjamin and the mechanical reproducibility of art works revisited', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 1993, vol. 33, pp. 357–66.
L. Koepnick, *Walter Benjamin and the Aesthetics of Power*, 2nd edn, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
T.Y. Levin, 'Walter Benjamin and the theory of art history', *October*, 1988, vol. 47, pp. 77–83.
M. Löwy, 'Walter Benjamin and surrealism: the story of a revolutionary spell', trans. D. Macey, *Radical Philosophy*, 1996, vol. 80, pp. 17–23.
A. McRobbie, 'The *Passagenwerk* and the place of Walter Benjamin in cultural studies: Benjamin, cultural studies, Marxist theories of art', *Cultural Studies*, 1992, vol. 6, pp. 147–69.
E.P. Miller, 'Negativity, iconoclasm, mimesis: Kristeva and Benjamin on political art', *Idealistic Studies*, 2008, vol. 38, pp. 55–74.
R. Nägele, *Theater, Theory, Speculation: Walter Benjamin and the Scenes of Modernity*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
A.V. Nielsen, 'Walter Benjamin and technology', *Orbis Litterarum*, 2007, vol. 48, pp. 135–44.
B. Olivier, 'No recording please! This is ART. Or: what do Cynthia Hawkins and Walter Benjamin have in common (not)?', *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 1996, vol. 15, pp. 8–14.
D. Petersson and E. Steinskog (eds), *Actualities of Aura: Twelve Studies of Walter Benjamin*, Svanesund: Nordic Summer University Press, 2005.
G. Richter (ed.), *Benjamin's Ghosts: Interventions in Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.
R. Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin*, trans. J.M. Todd, New York: Guilford Press, 1998.
U. Steiner, *Walter Benjamin: An Introduction to His Work and Thought*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010.
J. Todd, 'Production, reception, criticism: Walter Benjamin and the problem of meaning in art', *Philosophical Forum*, 1984, vol. 15, pp. 105–29.
S. Weigel, *Body- and Image-Space: Re-reading Walter Benjamin*, trans. G. Paul with R. McNicholl and J. Gaines, London: Routledge, 1996.
A.E. Weinbaum, 'Racial aura: Walter Benjamin and the work of art in a biotechnological age', *Literature and Medicine*, 2007, vol. 26, pp. 207–39.

Chapter 25

MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY

INTRODUCTION

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–61) is included in this section for his reappraisal of the significance of the body for aesthetics, but he could also have easily been placed in the 'Phenomenology and Hermeneutics' section. One of the projects of phenomenology is to situate human being in the world, and it does this by showing how the 'feel' of lived experience contains within it the structures of experience; these are structures which are prior to the division of the world into subject and object. We can see this in the work of Merleau-Ponty's contemporaries. Sartre's 'nothingness' is based on the absence we sense when expectations are not met; for Levinas, philosophical thought should have as its template our interaction with others; Dufrenne's 'artwork' makes visible the projection whereby we create a world for ourselves; and Bachelard constructs ontologies of thought from the experiences of home. The situated nature of human being receives its fullest articulation, I would argue, in the study of bodily experience conducted by Merleau-Ponty. Those aspects of our being normally regarded as aphysical, abstract, and descriptively elusive, i.e. consciousness, thought, memory, the actual 'having' of experience, Merleau-Ponty declares, can be shown to unfold from our condition as beings physically immersed in the world.

The body, Merleau-Ponty asserts in his seminal text, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), is not a thing among others in the world but a framework of intentionality. The intentionality of experience is the fundamental premise of phenomenology: experience is necessarily experience *of something*. Reality and my perception of it are interwoven in or *as* the texture of experience; the same, single fabric – experience – gives rise to two things: subjectivity and reality. This is the beginning of the project to transform the body into an ontology. We all think with or through an ontology; we all have an idea of what reality it is. More often than not, in the modern Western world, it is an ontology of things, of objects, of reality divided into bits and pieces. As a phenomenologist, Merleau-Ponty belongs to the tradition which asserts that this view of reality is problematic or incoherent, and argues for an alternative. The body is transformed into an ontology by Merleau-Ponty identifying it with the phenomenological project of articulating the conditions out of which experience and the world emerge. In this regard, the body is what he terms a 'body schema': a framework whereby consciousness and the world are opened up for each other.[1] Not only is it the medium which provides a coherent sensory picture of the world for us, but also something active and prospective which is able to play this constructive, objective role because it moves around the world and maps it out for us. We open onto the world through the body. For Merleau-Ponty, the body is that which 'enables me to freely engage the things around me, to choose to affiliate with certain persons or places, to insinuate myself in other lives... The body is my very means of entering into relation with all things.'[2]

'Eye and Mind' (1960) is one of the last essays Merleau-Ponty wrote before his sudden death in 1961 at the age of fifty-three. It is also the third and final article he produced on painting, the first two being 'Cézanne's Doubt' (1945) and 'Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence' (1952). As a series, the three essays plot the development of Merleau-Ponty's thought: from his assertion that Cézanne was seeking to exhibit visually the bodily structure of experience, as he defined it in *The Phenomenology of Perception* (published in the same year), through his encounter with structuralism and his dispute with Sartre and André Malraux in 'Indirect Language', to the more concerted formulation of an ontology of the body – and painting's place within it – in 'Eye and Mind'. Whereas 'Cézanne's Doubt' is preoccupied with showing how Cézanne's paintings and written observations wrestle with the differences between scientific and phenomenological accounts of perception (the differences were the focus of *The Phenomenology of Perception*), 'Eye and Mind' builds upon these differences to put in place a network of relations which helps us to understand vision as an operation that already has the bodily capacities of sensibility and locatability built into it. More importantly, the essay identifies modern painting as the mode of visual display which reveals this complexity within vision. This is in contrast to the classical, empiricist-scientific understanding of vision as an appearance, as the receipt of how the world looks, and in contrast to the classical concept of depiction which has it that a representational image is constructed to exist in some kind of point-to-point correspondence with its object.

The thinking behind the ontological significance assigned to painting in 'Eye and Mind' is evident in 'The Intertwining – The Chiasm', written one year later in 1961. Whereas contact between consciousness and reality is traditionally idealized as a perfect fit, Merleau-Ponty assigns the relationship a 'resistance' and 'thickness' which he calls 'flesh' and which, he argues, is the original opening of the subject–object distinction. We normally ascribe a sensory quality, like a colour, either to *the thing* or to *our* perception of the thing, but this assumes that nothing more is taking place in experience other than the meeting of two pre-formed components. If mind and reality met exactly, he argues, the two would 'blend into' one another and sensation 'would vanish at the moment of formation'.[3] Rather, perception involves a meshing between the way we sense the world to be and how this sensation is located in the world through the body. The body can bring sensory experience into being and organize it into a coherent whole because the sensory experience it makes available to us and the way it physically organizes and orientates itself in the world are mutually defining conditions. In order to make a particular range of sense experience available to us, the body must belong to a world in which it can contextualize the information received. For example, when I perceive a cube, I never see it all at once, but I am able to conceptualize it as a regular six-sided solid because, by rotating the cube in my fingers, *the rotation in my fingers* is an action in space which allows me to orient the successive stages of the experience as a whole cube. The exploration of my hand and what it will teach me can only open onto a tactile world, Merleau-Ponty argues, if my hand

> takes its place among the things it touches, is in a sense one of them, opens finally upon a tangible being of which it is also a part. Through this crisscrossing within it of the touching and the tangible, its own movements incorporate themselves into the universe they interrogate, are recorded on the same map as it; the two systems are applied upon one another, as the two halves of an orange.[4]

Flesh is not matter or substance but the mutual application of seeing upon being seen, and vice versa. The importance of this new term is that it changes what we understand by seeing. To see is not to receive an image of the world but to be part of a network of colours, sounds, textures,

etc., which are openings onto a world because they are set within that world through my body. The appearance of an object is not simply the appearance of an object (the appearance is not a property of the object) but a series of colours and shapes which invite other colours and shapes – and sounds and textures, for the senses talk to one another in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology; synaesthesia, he writes, 'is the rule' – because they are part of a bodily framework which is part of the world.[5]

The idea that the human body 'simultaneously sees and is seen' is what animates the painter, Merleau-Ponty declares in 'Eye and Mind'.[6] A painter uses her body to paint, but not in any means-end, instrumental fashion. The marks made on the canvas are not first and foremost correspondences with her object but punctuations in the exchange of seeing and being seen, traces of the ways in which the body as that which sees and that which is located in a world moves around and deals with the world. The marks are, in effect, punctuations in flesh in Merleau-Ponty's technical sense; that is to say, they are not impressions on the skin of the painter but moments which let us see how her bodily rootedness in the world is also the condition which allows her to see the world. Painting in this sense is first and foremost what Merleau-Ponty calls 'autofigurative'. The 'auto' refers neither to the painter nor to her perception of the world. Rather, painting is about itself as a bodily process in as much as it is the placing of dabs of paint by a body which looks, the articulation of vision as a mode of encounter which displays the situation and condition of which it is a part.

Notes

1 M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C. Smith, London: Routledge, 1962, p. 206.
2 Ibid., p. 47.
3 M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. C. Lefort, trans. A. Lingis, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968, p. 131.
4 Ibid., p. 133.
5 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 210. The synaesthetic correspondence between visibility (or vision) and tangibility (or touch) is also explored by Merleau-Ponty in 'The Intertwining – The Chiasm', *The Visible and the Invisible*, pp. 137–38.
6 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 138.

■ ■ ■

EYE AND MIND

MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY

> What I am trying to convey to you is more mysterious; it is entwined in the very roots of being, in the impalpable source of sensations.
>
> J. Gasquet, *Cézanne*

I

Science manipulates things and gives up living in them.[1] Operating within its own realm, it makes its constructs of things; operating upon these indices or variables to effect whatever transformations are permitted by their definition, it comes face to face with the real world only at rare intervals. It is, and always has been, that admirably active, ingenious, and bold way of

thinking whose fundamental bias is to treat everything as though it were an object-in-general – as though it meant nothing to us and yet was predestined for our ingenious schemes.

But classical science clung to a feeling for the opaqueness of the world, and it expected through its constructions to get back into the world. For this reason it felt obliged to seek a transcendent or transcendental foundation for its operations. Today we find – not in science but in a widely prevalent philosophy of the sciences – an entirely new approach. Constructive scientific activities see themselves and represent themselves to be autonomous, and their thinking deliberately reduces itself to a set of data-collecting techniques which it has invented. To think is thus to test out, to operate, to transform – the only restriction being that this activity is regulated by an experimental control that admits only the most 'worked-up' phenomena, more likely produced by the apparatus than recorded by it.

Whence all sorts of vagabond endeavors. Today more than ever, science is sensitive to intellectual fads and fashions. When a model has succeeded in one order of problems, it is tried out everywhere else. At the present time, for example, our embryology and biology are full of 'gradients.' Just how these differ from what classical tradition called 'order' or 'totality' is not at all clear. This question, however, is not raised; it is not even allowed. The gradient is a net we throw out to sea, without knowing what we will haul back in it. It is the slender twig upon which unforeseeable crystallizations will form. No doubt this freedom of operation will serve well to overcome many a pointless dilemma – provided only that from time to time we take stock, and ask ourselves why the apparatus works in one place and fails in others. For all its flexibility, science must understand itself; it must see itself as a construction based on a brute, existent world and not claim for its blind operations the constitutive value that 'concepts of nature' were granted in a certain idealist philosophy. To say that the world is, by nominal definition, the object *x* of our operations is to treat the scientist's knowledge as if it were absolute, as if everything that is and has been was meant only to enter the laboratory. Thinking 'operationally' has become a sort of absolute artificialism, such as we see in the ideology of cybernetics, where human creations are derived from a natural information process, itself conceived on the model of human machines. If this kind of thinking were to extend its dominion over humanity and history; and if, ignoring what we know of them through contact and our own situations, it were to set out to construct them on the basis of a few abstract indices (as a decadent psychoanalysis and culturalism have done in the United States) – then, since the human being truly becomes the *manipulandum* he thinks he is, we enter into a cultural regimen in which there is neither truth nor falsehood concerning humanity and history, into a sleep, or nightmare from which there is no awakening.

Scientific thinking, a thinking which looks on from above, and thinks of the object-in-general, must return to the 'there is' which precedes it; to the site, the soil of the sensible and humanly modified world such as it is in our lives and for our bodies – not that possible body which we may legitimately think of as an information machine but this actual body I call mine, this sentinel standing quietly at the command of my words and my acts. Further, *associated bodies* must be revived along with my body – 'others,' not merely as my congeners, as the zoologist says, but others who haunt me and whom I haunt; 'others' along with whom I haunt a single, present, and actual Being as no animal ever haunted those of his own species, territory, or habitat. In this primordial historicity, science's agile and improvisatory thought will learn to ground itself upon things themselves and upon itself, and will once more become philosophy… .

Now art, especially painting, draws upon this fabric of brute meaning which operationalism would prefer to ignore. Art and only art does so in full innocence. From the writer and the philosopher, in contrast, we want opinions and advice. We will not allow

them to hold the world suspended. We want them to take a stand; they cannot waive the responsibilities of humans who speak. Music, at the other extreme, is too far on the hither side of the world and the designatable to depict anything but certain schemata of Being – its ebb and flow, its growth, its upheavals, its turbulence.

Only the painter is entitled to look at everything without being obliged to appraise what he sees. For the painter, we might say, the watchwords of knowledge and action lose their meaning and force. Political regimes which denounce 'degenerate' painting rarely destroy paintings. They hide them, and one senses here an element of 'one never knows' amounting almost to an acknowledgment. The reproach of escapism is seldom aimed at the painter; we do not hold it against Cézanne that he lived hidden away at L'Estaque during the Franco-Prussian War. And we recall with respect his 'life is frightening,' although the most insignificant student, after Nietzsche, would flatly reject philosophy if he or she were told that it did not teach us how to live life to the fullest. It is as if in the painter's calling there were some urgency above all other claims on him. Strong or frail in life, but incontestably sovereign in his rumination of the world, possessed of no other 'technique' than the skill his eyes and hands discover in seeing and painting, he gives himself entirely to drawing from the world – with its din of history's glories and scandals – *canvases* which will hardly add to the angers or the hopes of humanity; and no one complains.[2] What, then, is the secret science which he has or which he seeks? That dimension which lets Van Gogh say he must go 'still further'? What is this fundamental of painting, perhaps of all culture?

II

The painter 'takes his body with him,' says Valéry. Indeed we cannot imagine how a *mind* could paint. It is by lending his body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings. To understand these transubstantiations we must go back to the working, actual body – not the body as a chunk of space or a bundle of functions but that body which is an intertwining of vision and movement.

I have only to see something to know how to reach it and deal with it, even if I do not know how this happens in the nervous system. My moving body makes a difference in the visible world, being a part of it; that is why I can steer it through the visible. Moreover, it is also true that vision is attached to movement. We see only what we look at. What would vision be without eye movement? And how could the movement of the eyes not blur things if movement were blind? If it were only a reflex? If it did not have its antennae, its clairvoyance? If vision were not prefigured in it?

All my changes of place figure on principle in a corner of my landscape; they are carried over onto the map of the visible. Everything I see is on principle within my reach, at least within reach of my sight, and is marked upon the map of the 'I can.' Each of the two maps is complete. The visible world and the world of my motor projects are both total parts of the same Being.

This extraordinary overlapping, which we never give enough thought to, forbids us to conceive of vision as an operation of thought that would set up before the mind a picture or a representation of the world, a world of immanence and of ideality. Immersed in the visible by his body, itself visible, the see-er does not appropriate what he sees; he merely approaches it by looking, he opens onto the world. And for its part, that world of which he is a part is not *in itself*, or matter. My movement is not a decision made by the mind, an absolute doing which would decree, from the depths of a subjective retreat, some change of place miraculously executed in extended space. It is the natural sequel to, and maturation of, vision. I say of a thing that it is moved; but my body moves itself; my movement is self-moved. It is not ignorance of self, blind to itself; it radiates from a self… .

The enigma derives from the fact that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognize, in what it sees, the 'other side' of its power of looking. It sees itself seeing; it touches itself touching; it is visible and sensitive for itself. It is a self, not by transparency, like thought, which never thinks anything except by assimilating it, constituting it, transforming it into thought – but a self by confusion, narcissism, inherence of the see-er in the seen, the toucher in the touched, the feeler in the felt – a self, then, that is caught up in things, having a front and a back, a past and a future… .

This initial paradox cannot but produce others. Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is one of them. It is caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it moves itself and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself.[3] Things are an annex or prolongation of itself; they are incrusted in its flesh, they are part of its full definition; the world is made of the very stuff of the body. These reversals, these antinomies,[4] are different ways of saying that vision is caught or comes to be in things – in that place where something visible undertakes to see, becomes visible to itself and in the sight of all things, in that place where there persists, like the original solution still present within crystal, the undividedness of the sensing and the sensed.

This interiority no more precedes the material arrangement of the human body than it results from it. What if our eyes were made in such a way as to prevent our seeing any part of our body, or some diabolical contraption were to let us move our hands over things, while preventing us from touching our own body? Or what if, like certain animals, we had lateral eyes with no cross-blending of visual fields? Such a body would not reflect itself; it would be an almost adamantine body, not really flesh, not really the body of a human being. There would be no humanity.

But humanity is not produced as the effect of our articulations or by the way our eyes are implanted in us (still less by the existence of mirrors, though they alone can make our entire bodies visible to us). These contingencies and others like them, without which mankind would not exist, do not by simple summation bring it about that there *is* a single man. The body's animation is not the assemblage or juxtaposition of its parts. Nor is it a question of a mind or spirit coming down from somewhere else into an automation – which would still imply that the body itself is without an inside and without a 'self.' A human body is present when, between the see-er and the visible, between touching and touched, between one eye and the other, between hand and hand a kind of crossover occurs, when the spark of the sensing/sensible is lit, when the fire starts to burn that will not cease until some accident befalls the body, undoing what no accident would have sufficed to do… .

Once this strange system of exchanges is given, we find before us all the problems of painting. These problems illustrate the enigma of the body, which enigma in turn legitimates them. Since things and my body are made of the same stuff, vision must somehow come about in them; or yet again, their manifest visibility must be repeated in the body by a secret visibility. 'Nature is on the inside,' says Cézanne. Quality, light, color, depth, which are there before us, are there only because they awaken an echo in our bodies and because the body welcomes them.

Things have an internal equivalent in me; they arouse in me a carnal formula of their presence. Why shouldn't these correspondences in turn give rise to some tracing rendered visible again, in which the eyes of others could find an underlying motif to sustain their inspection of the world?[5] Thus there appears a 'visible' to the second power, a carnal essence or icon of the first. It is not a faded copy, a *trompe l'oeil*, or another *thing*. The animals painted on the walls of Lascaux are not there in the same way as are the fissures and limestone formations. Nor are they *elsewhere*. Pushed forward here, held back there, supported by the wall's mass they use so adroitly, they radiate about the wall without ever breaking their elusive moorings. I would be hard pressed to say *where* the painting is I am looking at. For I do not look at it as one looks at a thing, fixing it in its place. My gaze wanders within it as in the halos of Being. Rather than seeing it, I see according to, or with it.

The word 'image' is in bad repute because we have thoughtlessly believed that a drawing was a tracing, a copy, a second thing, and that the mental image was such a drawing, belonging among our private bric-a-brac. But if in fact it is nothing of the kind, then neither the drawing nor the painting belongs to the in-itself any more than the image does. They are the inside of the outside and the outside of the inside, which the duplicity of feeling [*le sentir*] makes possible and without which we would never understand the quasi presence and imminent visibility which make up the whole problem of the imaginary. The picture, the actor's mimicry – these are not devices borrowed from the real world in order to refer to prosaic things which are absent. For the imaginary is much nearer to, and much farther away from, the actual – nearer because it is in my body as a diagram of the life of the actual, with all its pulp and carnal obverse exposed to view for the first time. In this sense, Giacometti says energetically, 'What interests me in all paintings is likeness – that is, what likeness is for me: something that makes me uncover the external world a little'.[6] And the imaginary is much farther away from the actual because the painting is an analogue or likeness only according to the body; because it does not offer the mind an occasion to rethink the constitutive relations of things, but rather it offers the *gaze* traces of vision, from the inside, in order that it may espouse them; it gives vision that which clothes it within, the imaginary texture of the real.[7]

Shall we say, then, that there is an inner gaze, that there is a third eye which sees the paintings and even the mental images, as we used to speak of a third ear which grasps messages from the outside through the noises they caused inside us? But how would this help us when the whole point is to understand that our fleshly eyes are already much more than receptors for light rays, colors, and lines? They are computers of the world, which have the gift of the visible, as we say of the inspired man that he has the gift of tongues. Of course this gift is earned by exercise; it is not in a few months, or in solitude, that a painter comes into full possession of his vision. But that is not the question; precocious or belated, spontaneous or cultivated in museums, his vision in any event learns only by seeing and learns only from itself. The eye sees the world, and what it would need to be a painting, sees what keeps a painting from being itself, sees – on the palette – the colors awaited by the painting, and sees, once it is done, the painting that answers to all these inadequacies just as it sees the paintings of others as other answers to other inadequacies.

It is no more possible to make a restrictive inventory of the visible than it is to catalog the possible expressions of a language or even its vocabulary and turns of phrase. The eye is an instrument that moves itself, a means which invents its own ends; it is *that which* has been moved by some impact of the world, which it then restores to the visible through the traces of a hand.

In whatever civilization it is born, from whatever beliefs, motives, or thoughts, no matter what ceremonies surround it – and even when it appears devoted to something else – from Lascaux to our time, pure or impure, figurative or not, painting celebrates no other enigma but that of visibility.

What we have just said amounts to a truism. The painter's world is a visible world, nothing but visible: a world almost mad, because it is complete though only partial. Painting awakens and carries to its highest pitch a delirium which is vision itself, for to see is *to have at a distance*; painting extends this strange possession to all aspects of Being, which must somehow become visible in order to enter into the work of art. When, apropos of Italian painting, the young Berenson spoke of an evocation of tactile values, he could hardly have been more mistaken; painting evokes nothing, least of all the tactile. What it does is entirely different, almost the inverse. It gives visible existence to what profane vision believes to be invisible; thanks to it we do not need a 'muscular sense' in order to possess the voluminosity of the world. This voracious vision, reaching beyond the 'visual givens,' opens upon a texture of Being of which the discrete sensorial messages are only the punctuations or the caesurae. The eye lives in this texture as a man in his house.

Let us remain within the visible in the narrow and prosaic sense. The painter, any painter, *while he is painting*, practices a magical theory of vision. He is obliged to admit that objects before him pass into him or else that, according to Malebranche's sarcastic dilemma, the mind goes out through the eyes to wander among objects; for he never ceases adjusting his clairvoyance to them. (It makes no difference if he does not paint from 'nature'; he paints, in any case, because he has seen, because the world has at least once emblazoned in him the ciphers of the visible.) He must affirm, as one philosopher has said, that vision is a mirror or concentration of the universe or that, in another's words, the *idios kosmos* opens by virtue of vision upon a *koinos kosmos*; in short, that the same thing is both out there in the world and here at the heart of vision – the same or, if you will, a *similar* thing, but according to an efficient similarity which is the parent, the genesis, the metamorphosis of being into its vision. It is the mountain itself which from out there makes itself seen by the painter; it is the mountain that he interrogates with his gaze.

What exactly does he ask of it? To unveil the means, visible and not otherwise, by which it makes itself mountain before our eyes. Light, lighting, shadows, reflections, color, all these objects of his quest are not altogether real objects; like ghosts, they have only visual existence. In fact they exist only at the threshold of profane vision; they are not ordinarily seen. The painter's gaze asks them what they do to suddenly cause something to be and to be *this* thing, what they do to compose this talisman of a world, to make us see the visible. The hand pointing toward us in *The Nightwatch* is truly there only when we see that its shadow on the captain's body presents it simultaneously in profile. The spatiality of the captain lies at the intersection of the two perspectives which are incompossible and yet together. Everyone with eyes has at some time or other witnessed this play of shadows, or something like it, and has been made by it to see things and a space. But it worked in them without them; it hid to make the object visible. To see the object, it was necessary *not* to see the play of shadows and light around it. The visible in the profane sense forgets its premises; it rests upon a total visibility which is to be recreated and which liberates the phantoms captive in it. The moderns, as we know, have liberated many others; they have added many a muted tone to the official gamut of our means of seeing. But the interrogation of painting in any case looks toward this secret and feverish genesis of things in our body.

And so it is not a question asked of someone who doesn't know by someone who does – the schoolmaster's question. The question comes from one who does not know, and it is addressed to a vision, a seeing, which knows everything and which we do not make, for it makes itself in us. Max Ernst (with the surrealists) says rightly, 'Just as the role of the poet since [Rimbaud's] famous *Lettre du voyant* consists in writing under the dictation of what is being thought, of what articulates itself in him, the painter's role is to circumscribe and project what is making itself seen within himself.'[8] The painter lives in fascination. The actions most proper to him – those gestures, those tracings of which he alone is capable and which will be revelations to others because they do not lack what he lacks – to him they seem to emanate from the things themselves, like figures emanating from the constellations.

Inevitably the roles between the painter and the visible switch. That is why so many painters have said that things look at them. As André Marchand says, after Klee: 'In a forest, I have felt many times over that it was not I who looked at the forest. Some days I felt that the trees were looking at me, were speaking to me. … I was there, listening. … I think that the painter must be penetrated by the universe and not want to penetrate it. … I expect to be inwardly submerged, buried. Perhaps I paint to break out.'[9]

We speak of 'inspiration,' and the word should be taken literally. There really is inspiration and expiration of Being, respiration in Being, action and passion so slightly discernible that it becomes impossible to distinguish between who sees and who is seen, who paints and what is

painted. We say that a human being is born the moment when something that was only virtually visible within the mother's body becomes at once visible for us and for itself. The painter's vision is an ongoing birth.

In paintings themselves we could seek a figured philosophy[10] of vision – its iconography, perhaps. It is no accident, for example, that frequently in Dutch paintings (as in many others) an interior in which no one is present is 'digested' by the 'round eye of the mirror.'[11] This prehuman way of seeing things is emblematic of the painter's way. More completely than lights, shadows, and reflections, the mirror image anticipates, within things, the labor of vision. Like all other technical objects, such as tools and signs, the mirror has sprung up along the open circuit *between* the seeing and the visible body. Every technique is a 'technique of the body,' illustrating and amplifying the metaphysical structure of our flesh. The mirror emerges because I am a visible see-er, because there is a reflexivity of the sensible; the mirror translates and reproduces that reflexivity. In it, my externality becomes complete. Everything that is most secret about me passes into that face, that flat, closed being of which I was already dimly aware, from having seen my reflection mirrored in water. Schilder observes that, smoking a pipe before a mirror, I feel the sleek, burning surface of the wood not only where my fingers are but also in those otherworldly fingers, those merely visible ones inside the mirror.[12] The mirror's phantom draws my flesh into the outer world, and at the same time the invisible of my body can invest its psychic energy in the other bodies I see.[13] Hence my body can include elements drawn from the body of another, just as my substance passes into them; man is a mirror for man. Mirrors are instruments of a universal magic that converts things into spectacle, spectacle into things, myself into another, and another into myself. Artists have often mused upon mirrors because beneath this 'mechanical trick,' they recognized, as they did in the case of the 'trick' of perspective,[14] the metamorphosis of seeing and seen that defines both our flesh and the painter's vocation. This explains why they have so often chosen to draw themselves in the act of painting (they still do – witness Matisse's drawings), adding to what *they* could see of things at that moment, what *things* could see of them – as if to attest to there being a total or absolute vision, leaving nothing outside, including themselves. Where in the realm of the understanding can we place these occult operations, together with the potions and idols they concoct? What can we call them? Consider, as Sartre did in *Nausea*, the smile of a long-dead monarch which keeps producing and reproducing itself on the surface of a canvas. It is too little to say that it is there as an image or essence; it is there as itself, as that which was always most alive about it, the moment I look at the painting. The 'world's instant' that Cézanne wanted to paint, an instant long since passed away, is still hurled toward us by his paintings.[15] His *Mont. Sainte-Victoire* is made and remade from one end of the world to the other in a way different from but no less energetic than in the hard rock above Aix. Essence and existence, imaginary and real, visible and invisible – painting scrambles all our categories, spreading out before us its oneiric universe of carnal essences, actualized resemblances, mute meanings.

III

How crystal clear everything would be in our philosophy if only we would exorcise these specters, make illusions or objectless perceptions out of them, brush them to one side of an unequivocal world!

Descartes's *Dioptrics* is an attempt to do just that. It is the breviary of a thought that wants no longer to abide in the visible and so decides to reconstruct it according to a model-in-thought. It is worthwhile to remember this attempt and its failure.

Here there is no concern to cling to vision. The problem is to know 'how it happens,' but only enough to invent, whenever the need arises, certain 'artificial organs' which correct it.[16]

We are to reason not so much upon the light we see as upon the light which, from outside, enters our eyes and regulates our vision. And for that we are to rely upon 'two or three comparisons which help us to conceive it [light]' in such a way as to explain its known properties and to deduce others.[17] The question being so formulated, it is best to think of light as an action by contact – not unlike the action of things upon the blind man's cane. The blind, says Descartes, 'see with their hands.'[18] The Cartesian model of vision is modeled after the sense of touch.

At one swoop, then, Descartes eliminates action at a distance and relieves us of that ubiquity which is the whole problem of vision (as well as its peculiar virtue). Why should we henceforth puzzle over reflections and mirrors? These unreal duplications are a class of things; they are real effects like a ball bouncing back. If the reflection resembles the thing itself, it is because this reflection acts upon the eyes more or less as a thing would. It deceives the eye by engendering a perception which has no object, yet this perception does not affect our conception of the world. In the world there is the thing itself, and outside this thing itself there is that other thing which is only reflected light rays and which happens to have an ordered correspondence with the real thing; there are two individuals, then, bound together externally by causality. As far as the thing and its mirror image are concerned, their resemblance is only an external denomination; the resemblance belongs to thought. The dubious relationship of likeness is – among things – an unequivocal relationship of projection.

The Cartesian does not see *himself* in the mirror; he sees a puppet, an 'outside,' which, he has every reason to believe, other people see in the very same way, but which is no more for himself than for others a body in the flesh. His 'image' in the mirror is an effect of the mechanics of things. If he recognizes himself in it, if he thinks it 'looks like him,' it is his thought that weaves this connection. The mirror image is in no sense *a part of* him. For him, icons lose their powers.[19] However vividly an etching may 'represent' forests, towns, men, battles, storms, it does not resemble them. It is only a bit of ink put down here and there on the paper. A figure flattened down onto a plane surface scarcely retains the forms of things; it is a deformed figure that *must* be deformed – the square becomes a lozenge, the circle an oval – *in order to* represent the object. It is an image only as long as it does not resemble its object. If not through resemblance, how, then, does it work? It 'excites our thought' to 'conceive,' as do signs and words 'which in no way resemble the things they signify.'[20] The etching gives us sufficient indices, unequivocal 'means' for forming an idea of the thing that does not come from the icon itself; rather, it arises in us, as 'occasioned' by the icon. The magic of intentional species – the old idea of effective resemblance so strongly suggested to us by mirrors and paintings – loses its final argument if the entire potential of a painting is that of a text to be read, a text totally free of promiscuity between the seeing and the seen. We need no longer try to understand how a painting of things in the body could make them felt in the soul – an impossible task, since the very resemblance between this painting and those things would have to be seen in turn, since we would 'have to have other eyes in our minds with which to apperceive it,'[21] and since the problem of vision remains intact even after we have introduced these simulacra, wandering between things and us. What the light casts upon our eyes, and thence upon our brain, does not resemble the visible world any more than etchings do. Nothing goes from things to the eyes, and from the eyes to vision, no more than from things to a blind man's hands, and from his hands to his thoughts.

Vision is not the metamorphosis of things themselves into the sight of them; it is not a matter of things' belonging simultaneously to the world at large and a little private world. It is a thinking that unequivocally decodes signs given within the body. Resemblance is the result of perception, not its basis. Thus, the mental image, the visualization which renders present to us what is absent, is a fortiori nothing like a break-through to the heart of Being. It too is a thought relying upon bodily indices – this time insufficient ones – which are made to say more than they mean. Nothing is left of the oneiric world of analogy… .

What interests us in these famous analyses is that they make us aware of the fact that every theory of painting is a metaphysics. Descartes does not say much about painting, and one might think it unfair on our part to make so much of a few pages on engravings. And yet the very fact that he speaks of painting only in passing is itself significant. Painting for him is not a central operation contributing to the definition of our access to Being; it is a mode or a variant of thinking, where thinking is canonically defined as intellectual possession and self-evidence. His very brevity is the indication of a choice; a closer study of painting would lead to a different philosophy. It is significant, too, that when he speaks of 'pictures' [*tableaux*] he takes line drawings as typical. We shall see that the whole of painting is present in each of its modes of expression; there is a kind of drawing, even a single line, that can embrace all of painting's bold potential.

But what Descartes likes most about engravings is that they preserve the form of objects, or at least give us sufficient signs of their forms. They present the object by its outside, or its envelope. If he had examined that other, deeper opening upon things given us by the secondary qualities, especially color, then – since there is no rule-governed or projective relationship between them and the true properties of things, and we understand their message all the same – he would have found himself faced with the problem of a conceptless universality and opening upon things. He would have been obliged to find out how the uncertain murmur of colors can present us with things, forests, storms – in short the world. He would have been obliged, perhaps, to integrate perspective, as a particular case, into a broader ontological power. But for him it goes without saying that color is an ornament, mere coloring, and that the real power of painting lies in drawing, whose power in turn rests upon the ordered relationship between it and objective space established by perspectival projection. Pascal's famous saying that painting is frivolous because it attaches us to images whose originals would not move us is a Cartesian saying. For Descartes it is self-evident that one can paint only existing things, that their existence consists in being extended, and line drawing alone makes painting possible by making possible the representation of extension. Thus painting is only an artifice that puts before our eyes a projection similar to the one things themselves would (and do, according to the commonsense view) inscribe in them. Painting causes us to see, without real objects, just as we see things in everyday life; and in particular it makes us see empty space where there is none.[22]

The picture is a flat thing contriving to give us what we would see in the presence of 'diversely positioned' things, by offering sufficient diacritical signs, through height and width, of the missing dimension.[23] Depth is a *third dimension* derived from the other two.

It will be worth our while to dwell for a moment upon this third dimension. There is, at first glance, something paradoxical about it. I see objects that hide each other and that consequently I do not see; each one stands behind the other. I see depth and yet it is not visible, since it is reckoned from our bodies to things, and we are [as Cartesians] confined to our bodies. There is no real mystery here. I do not really see depth or, if I do, it is only another *size*. On the line from my eyes to the horizon, the foreground forever hides all the other planes, and if on either side I think I see things staggered at intervals, it is because they do not completely hide each other. Thus I see each thing outside the others, according to a width measured differently.[24] We are [as Cartesians] always on the hither side of depth, or beyond it. It is never the case that things really *are* one behind the other. The encroachment and latency do not enter into their definition. They express only my incomprehensible solidarity with one of them – my body; and by their positivity they are thoughts of mine and not attributes of things. I know that at this very moment another person, situated elsewhere – or better, God, who is everywhere – could penetrate their hiding place and see them openly deployed. What I call depth is either nothing, or else it is my participation in a Being without restriction, first and foremost a participation in the being of space beyond every particular point of view. Things encroach upon one another *because they are*

outside one another. The proof of this is that I can see depth in a painting which everyone agrees has none and which organizes for me an illusion of an illusion. … This two-dimensional being,[25] which makes me see a third, is a being that is pierced [*troué*] – as the men of the Renaissance said, a window. … But in the final analysis the window opens only upon *partes extra partes*, upon height and breadth merely seen from another angle – upon the absolute positivity of Being.

It is this space without hiding places which in each of its points is only what it is, neither more nor less, this identity of Being that underlies the analysis of engravings. Space is in itself; rather, it is the in-itself par excellence. Its definition is *to be* in itself. Every point of space is, and is thought as being, right where it is – one here, another there; space is the self-evidence of the 'where.' Orientation, polarity, envelopment are, in space, derived phenomena linked to my presence. *Space* remains absolutely in itself, everywhere equal to itself, homogeneous; its dimensions, for example, are by definition interchangeable.

Like all classical ontologies, this one elevates certain properties of beings into a structure of Being, and in so doing it is both true and false. Reversing Leibniz's remark, we might say that it is true in what it denies and false in what it affirms. Descartes's space is true, when contrasted with a thought too empirically dominated, which dares not construct. It was necessary first to idealize space, to conceive of that being – perfect of its kind, clear, manageable, and homogeneous – which an unsituated thinking glides over without a vantage point of its own: a being which thought transcribes in its entirety onto three right-angled axes – so that subsequent thinkers could one day experience the limitations of that construction and understand that space does not have precisely three dimensions (as an animal has either four or two legs), and that dimensions are taken by different systems of measurement from a single dimensionality, a polymorphous Being, which justifies all of them without being fully expressed by any. Descartes was right in liberating space: his mistake was to erect it into a positive being, beyond all points of view, all latency and depth, devoid of any real thickness.

He was also right in taking his inspiration from the perspectival techniques of the Renaissance; they encouraged painting to experiment freely with depth and the presentation of Being in general. These techniques were false only in that they presumed to bring an end to painting's quest and history, to found once and for all an exact and infallible art of painting. As Panofsky has shown concerning the men of the Renaissance, this enthusiasm was not without bad faith.[26] The theoreticians tried to forget the spherical visual field of the ancients, their angular perspective which relates the apparent size not to distance but to the angle from which we see the object. They wanted to forget what they disdainfully called *perspectiva naturalis*, or *communis*, in favor of a *perspectiva artificialis* capable in principle of founding an exact construction. To accredit this myth, they went so far as to expurgate Euclid, omitting from their translations the eighth theorem, which was inconvenient. But the painters knew from experience that no technique of perspective is an exact solution and that there is no projection of the existing world which respects it in all aspects and deserves to become the fundamental law of painting. They knew that linear perspective was far from being an ultimate breakthrough; on the contrary, it opened several pathways for painting. For example, the Italians took the way of representing the object, but the Northern painters discovered and worked out the formal technique of *Hochraum*, *Nahraum*, and *Schrägraum*. Thus plane projection does not always stimulate our thought to rediscover the true form of things, as Descartes believed. Beyond a certain degree of deformation, it refers us back, on the contrary, to our own vantage point; as for the things, they flee into a remoteness out of reach of all thought. Something about space evades our attempts to survey it from above.

The truth is that no means of expression, once mastered, resolves the problems of painting or transforms it into a technique. For no symbolic form ever functions as a stimulus. Symbolic form works and acts only in conjunction with the entire context of the *work*, and not at all by

means of a *trompe-l'oeil*. The *Stilmoment* never dispenses with the *Wermoment*.[27] The language of painting is never 'instituted by nature'; it must be made and remade. The perspective of the Renaissance is no infallible 'gimmick.' It is only one particular case, a date, a moment in a poetic information of the world which continues after it.

Yet Descartes would not have been Descartes if he had thought to *eliminate* the enigma of vision. For him, there is no vision without thought: but *it is not enough* to think in order to see. Vision is a conditioned thought; it is born 'as occasioned' by what happens in the body; it is 'incited' to think by the body. It does not *choose* either to be or not to be or to think this thing or that. It must carry in its heart that heaviness, that dependence which cannot come to it by some intrusion from outside. Such bodily events are 'instituted by nature' in order to bring us to see this thing or that. The thinking that belongs to vision functions according to a program and a law which it has not given itself. It does not possess its own premises; it is not a thought altogether present and actual; there is in its center a mystery of passivity.

Thus the Cartesian situation is as follows. Everything we say and think of vision has to make a *thought* of it. When, for example, we wish to understand how we see the location of objects, we have no other recourse than to suppose the soul to be capable, knowing where the parts of its body are, of 'transferring its attention from there' to all the points of space that lie along the prolongation of its bodily members.[28] But so far this is only a 'model' of the event. For how does the soul know that space of its body which it extends toward things, that primary *here* from which all the *theres* will come? This space is not, like them, just another mode or specimen of extension; it is the place of the body the soul calls 'mine,' a place the soul inhabits. The body it animates is not, for it, an object among objects, and it does not deduce from its body all the rest of space as an implied premise. The soul thinks according to the body, not according to itself, and space, or exterior distance, is also stipulated within the natural pact that unites them. If, at a certain degree of ocular accommodation and convergence the soul becomes aware of a certain distance, the thought which draws the second relationship from the first is as if immemorially encoded in our inner workings. 'Usually this comes about without our reflecting upon it – just as, when we clasp a body with our hand, we conform the hand to the size and shape of the body and thereby sense the body, without having need to think of those movements of the hand.'[29] The body is both the soul's native space, and the matrix of every other existing space. Thus vision doubles. There is the vision upon which I reflect; I cannot think it except *as* thought, the mind's inspection, judgment, a reading of signs. And then there is the vision that actually occurs, an honorary or established thought, collapsed into a body – its own body, of which we can have no idea except in the exercise of it, and which introduces, between space and thought, the autonomous order of the composite of soul and body. The enigma of vision is not done away with; it is shifted from the 'thought of seeing' to vision in act.

Still, this de facto vision and the 'there is' which it contains do not upset Descartes's philosophy. Since it is thought united with a body, it cannot, by definition, truly be conceived. One can practice it, exercise it, and, so to speak, exist it; yet one can draw nothing from it which deserves to be called true. If, like Queen Elizabeth,[30] we want at all costs to think *something* about it, all we can do is go back to Aristotle and scholasticism, to conceive thought as a corporeal something which cannot be conceived but which is the only way to formulate, for our understanding, the union of soul and body. The truth is that it is absurd to submit to pure understanding the mixture of understanding and body. These would-be thoughts are the emblems of 'the practice of everyday life,' the verbal blazons of union, permissible only if not taken to be thoughts. They are indices of an order of existence – of humanity and world as existing – of which we are not held to produce a concept. For this order there is no *terra incognita* on our map of Being. It does not confine the reach of our thoughts, because it, just as much as they, is sustained by a Truth which grounds its obscurity as well as our own lights.[31]

We have to go to these lengths to find in Descartes something like a metaphysics of depth. For we are not present at the birth of this Truth; God's being is for us an abyss. An anxious trembling quickly mastered; for Descartes it is just as futile to plumb that abyss as it is to think the space of the soul and the depth of the visible. Our very position, he would say, disqualifies us from looking into such things. That is the secret of Cartesian equilibrium: a metaphysics which gives us definitive reasons to leave off doing metaphysics, which validates our self-evidence while limiting it, which opens up our thinking without rending it.

The secret has been lost, and lost for good, it seems. If we are ever again to find a balance between science and philosophy, between our models and the obscurity of the 'there is,' it must be of a new kind. Our science has rejected the justifications as well as the restrictions which Descartes assigned to its domain. It no longer pretends to deduce its invented models from the attributes of God. The depth of the existing world and an unfathomable God no longer stand over against the flatness of 'technicized' thought. Science manages without the excursion into metaphysics that Descartes had to make at least once in his life; it begins from the point he ultimately reached. Operational thought claims for itself, in the name of psychology, that domain of contact with oneself and with the world which Descartes reserved for a blind but irreducible experience. Operational thought is fundamentally hostile to philosophy as thought-in-contact, and if it rediscovers a sense of such a philosophy, it will be through the very excess of its daring; when, having introduced all sorts of notions that Descartes would have held to arise from confused thought – quality, scalar structures, solidarity of observer and observed – it suddenly realizes that one cannot summarily speak of all these beings as *constructs*. Meanwhile, philosophy maintains itself against such operationalist thinking, plunging itself into that dimension of the composite of soul and body, of the existent world, of the abyssal Being that Descartes opened up and so quickly closed again. Our science and our philosophy are two faithful and unfaithful offshoots of Cartesianism, two monsters born of its dismemberment.

Nothing is left for our philosophy but to set out to prospect the actual world. We *are* the compound of soul and body, and so there must be a thought of it. It is to this knowledge by position or situation that Descartes owes what he himself says of it, or what he sometimes says of the presence of the body 'against the soul,' or of the exterior world 'at the tip' of our hands. Here the body is no longer the means of vision and touch, but their depository.

Our organs are not instruments; on the contrary, our instruments are added-on organs. Space is not what it was in the *Dioptrics*, a network of relations between objects such as would be seen by a third party, witnessing my vision, or by a geometer looking over it and reconstructing it from outside. It is, rather, a space reckoned starting from me as the null point or degree zero of spatiality. I do not see it according to its exterior envelope; I live it from the inside; I am immersed in it. After all, the world is around me, not in front of me. Light is found once more to be action at a distance. It is no longer reduced to the action of contact or, in other words, conceived as it might be by those who cannot see.[32] Vision reassumes its fundamental power of manifestation, of showing more than itself. And since we are told that a bit of ink suffices to make us see forests and storms, light must have its own power to generate the imaginary. Its transcendence is not delegated to a reading mind which deciphers the impacts of the light qua thing upon the brain and which could do this quite as well if it had never inhabited a body. No longer is it a matter of speaking about space and light, but of making space and light, which are *there*, speak to us. There is no end to this questioning, since the vision to which it is addressed is itself a question. All the inquiries we believed closed have been reopened. What is depth, what is light, τί το ὄν? What are they – not for the mind that cuts itself off from the body but for the mind Descartes says is suffused throughout the body? And what are they, finally, not only for the mind but for themselves, since they pass through us and surround us?

This philosophy, which is yet to be elaborated, is what animates the painter – not when he expresses opinions about the world but in that instant when his vision becomes gesture, when, in Cézanne's words, he 'thinks in painting.'[33]

IV

The entire history of painting in the modern period, with its efforts to detach itself from illusionism and acquire its own dimensions, has a metaphysical significance. There can be no question of demonstrating this here. Not because of the limits of objectivity in history and the inevitable plurality of interpretations, which would forbid linking a philosophy and an event, for the metaphysics we have in mind is not a separate body of ideas of which inductive justifications could then be sought in the experiential realm – and there are, in the flesh of contingency, a structure of the event and a virtue peculiar to the scenario that do not prevent the plurality of interpretations but in fact are the deepest reason for it. They make the event a durable theme of historical life, and have a right to philosophical status. In a sense everything that may have been said and will be said about the French Revolution has always been and will henceforth be within it, in that wave arising from a roil of discrete facts, with its froth of the past and its crest of the future. And it is always by looking more deeply into *how it came about* that we make and will go on making new representations of it. As for the history of works of art, in any case, if they are great, the sense we give to them later on has issued from them. It is the work itself that has opened the perspective from which it appears in another light. It transforms *itself* and *becomes* what follows; the interminable interpretations to which it is *legitimately* susceptible change it only into itself. And if the historian unearths beneath its manifest content a surplus and thickness of meaning, a texture which held the promise of a long history, then this active manner of being, this possibility he unveils in the work, this monogram he finds there – all are grounds for a philosophical meditation. But such a labor demands a long familiarity with history. I lack everything for its execution, both competence and space. But since the power or the fecundity of works of art exceeds every positive causal or linear relation, it is not illegitimate for a layman such as myself, speaking from his memory of a few paintings and books, to express how painting enters into his reflections, and to register his sense of a profound dissonance, a transformation in the relationship between humanity and Being, when he holds up a universe of classical thought, contrasting it en bloc with the explorations of modern painting. A sort of history by contact, that perhaps does not go beyond the limits of one person, though it owes everything to his frequentation of others… .

'I believe Cézanne was seeking depth all his life,' says Giacometti.[34] Says Robert Delaunay, 'Depth is the new inspiration.'[35] Four centuries after the 'solutions' of the Renaissance and three centuries after Descartes, depth is still new, and it insists on being sought, not 'once in a lifetime' but all through life. It cannot be merely a question of an unmysterious interval, as seen from an airplane, between these trees nearby and those farther away. Nor is it a matter of the way things are conjured away, one by another, as we see so vividly portrayed in a perspective drawing. These two views are very explicit and raise no problems. The enigma, though, lies in their bond, in what is between them. The enigma consists in the fact that I see things, each one in its place, precisely because they eclipse one another, and that they are rivals before my sight precisely because each one is in its own place – in their exteriority, known through their envelopment, and their mutual dependence in their autonomy. Once depth is understood in this way, we can no longer call it a third dimension. In the first place, if it were a dimension, it would be the *first* one; there are forms and definite planes only if it is stipulated how far from me their different parts are. But a *first* dimension that contains all the others is no longer a dimension, at

least in the ordinary sense of a *certain relationship* according to which we make measurements. Depth thus understood is, rather, the experience of the reversibility of dimensions, of a global 'locality' in which everything is in the same place at the same time, a locality from which height, width, and depth are abstracted, a voluminosity we express in a word when we say that a thing is *there*. In pursuing depth, what Cézanne is seeking is this deflagration of Being, and it is all in the modes of space, and in form as well. Cézanne already knew what cubism would restate: that the external form, the envelope, is secondary and derived, that it is not what makes a thing to take form, that that shell of space must be shattered – the fruit bowl must be broken. But then what should be painted instead? Cubes, spheres, and cones – as he said once? Pure forms having the solidity of what could be defined by an internal law of construction, forms which taken together, as traces or cross-sections of the thing, let it appear between them like a face in the reeds? This would be to put Being's solidity on one side and its variety on the other. Cézanne had already made an experiment of this kind in his middle period. He went directly to the solid, to space – and came to find that inside this space – this box or container too large for them – the things began to move, color against color; they began to modulate in the instability.[36] Thus we must seek space and its content *together*. The problem becomes generalized; it is no longer solely that of distance, line, and form; it is also, and equally, the problem of color.

Color is the 'place where our brain and the universe meet,' he says in that admirable idiom of the artisan of Being which Klee liked to quote.[37] It is for the sake of color that we must break up the form *qua* spectacle. Thus the question is not of colors, 'simulacra of the colors of nature.'[38] The question, rather, concerns the dimension of color, that dimension which creates – from itself to itself – identities, differences, a texture, a materiality, a something… .

Yet there is clearly no one master key of the visible, and color alone is no closer to being such a key than space is. The return to color has the virtue of getting somewhat nearer to 'the heart of things,'[39] but this heart is beyond the color envelope just as it is beyond the space envelope. The *Portrait of Vallier* sets white spaces between the colors which take on the function of giving shape to, and setting off, a being more general than yellow-being or green-being or blue-being. Similarly, in the water colors of Cézanne's last years, space (which had been taken to be self-evidence itself and of which it was believed that the question of *where* was not to be asked) radiates around planes that cannot be assigned to any place at all: 'a superimposing of transparent surfaces,' 'a flowing movement of planes of color which overlap, advance and retreat.'[40]

As we can see, it is not a matter of adding one more dimension to those of the flat canvas, of organizing an illusion or an objectless perception whose perfection consists in simulating an empirical vision to the maximum degree. Pictorial depth (as well as painted height and width) comes 'I know not whence' to alight upon, and take root in, the sustaining support. The painter's vision is not a view upon the *outside*, a merely 'physical-optical'[41] relation with the world. The world no longer stands before him through representation; rather, it is the painter to whom the things of the world give birth by a sort of concentration or coming-to-itself of the visible. Ultimately the painting relates to nothing at all among experienced things unless it is first of all 'autofigurative.'[42] It is a spectacle of something only by being a 'spectacle of nothing,'[43] by breaking the 'skin of things'[44] to show how the things become things, how the world becomes world. Apollinaire said that in a poem there are phrases which do not appear to have been *created*, which seem to have *shaped themselves*. And Henri Michaux said that sometimes Klee's colors seem to have been born slowly upon the canvas, to have emanated from some primordial ground, 'exhaled at the right spot'[45] like a patina or a mold. Art is not construction, artifice, the meticulous relationship to a space and a world existing outside. It is truly the 'inarticulate cry,' as Hermes Trismegistus said, 'which seemed to be the voice of the light.' And once it is present it awakens powers dormant in ordinary vision, a secret of preexistence. When through

the water's thickness I see the tiled bottom of the pool, I do not see it *despite* the water and the reflections; I see it through them and because of them. If there were no distortions, no ripples of sunlight, if it were without that flesh that I saw the geometry of the tiles, then I would cease to see it *as* it is and where it is – which is to say, beyond any identical, specific place. I cannot say that the water itself – the aqueous power, the syrupy and shimmering element – is *in* space; all this is not somewhere else either, but it is not in the pool. It inhabits it, is materialized there, yet it is not contained there; and if I lift my eyes toward the screen of cypresses where the web of reflections plays, I must recognize that the water visits it as well, or at least sends out to it its active, living essence. This inner animation, this radiation of the visible, is what the painter seeks beneath, the words *depth*, *space*, and *color*.

Anyone who thinks about the matter finds it astonishing that very often a good painter can also produce good drawings or good sculpture. Since neither the means of expression nor the creative gestures are comparable, this is proof that there is a system of equivalences, a Logos of lines, of lighting, of colors, of reliefs, of masses – a nonconceptual presentation of universal Being. The effort of modern painting has been directed not so much toward choosing between line and color, or even between figurative depiction and the creation of signs, as it has been toward multiplying the systems of equivalences, toward severing their adherence to the envelope of things. This effort may require the creation of new materials or new means of expression, but it may well be realized at times by the reexamination and reuse of those already at hand.

There has been, for example, a prosaic conception of the line as a positive attribute and property of the object in itself. Thus, it is the outer contour of the apple or the border between the plowed field and the meadow, considered as present in the world, such that, guided by points taken from the real world, the pencil or brush would only have to pass over them. But this line has been contested by all modern painting, and probably by all painting, as we are led to think by da Vinci's comment in his *Treatise on Painting*: 'The secret of the art of drawing is to discover in each object the particular way in which a certain flexuous line, which is, so to speak, its generating axis, is directed through its whole extent.'[46] Both Ravaisson and Bergson sensed something important in this, without daring to decipher the oracle all the way. Bergson scarcely looked for the 'sinuous outline [*serpentement*]' outside living beings, and he rather timidly advanced the idea that the undulating line 'could be no one of the visible lines of the figure,' that it is 'no more here than there,' and yet 'gives the key to the whole.'[47] He was on the threshold of that gripping discovery, already familiar to the painters, that there are no lines visible in themselves, that neither the contour of the apple nor the border between field and meadow is in *this* place or that, that they are always on the near or the far side of the point we look at. They are always between or behind whatever we fix our eyes upon; they are indicated, implicated, and even very imperiously demanded by the things, but they themselves are not things. They were thought to circumscribe the apple or the meadow, but the apple and the meadow 'form themselves' from themselves, and come into the visible as if they had come from a prespatial world behind the scenes.

Yet this challenging of the prosaic line is far from ruling out all lines in painting, as the impressionists may have thought. It is simply a matter of freeing the line, of revivifying its constituting power; and we are not faced with a contradiction when we see it reappear and triumph in painters like Klee or Matisse, who more than anyone believed in color. For henceforth, as Klee said, the line no longer imitates the visible; it 'renders visible'; it is the blueprint of a genesis of things. Perhaps no one before Klee had 'let a line muse.'[48] The beginning of the line's path establishes or installs a certain level or mode of the linear, a certain manner for the line to be and to make itself a line, 'to go line.'[49] Relative to it, every subsequent inflection will have a diacritical value, will be another aspect of the line's relationship to itself, will form an

adventure, a history, a meaning of the line – all this according as it slants more or less, more or less rapidly, more or less subtly. Making its way in space, it nevertheless corrodes prosaic space and its *partes extra partes*; it develops a way of extending itself actively into that space which subtends the spatiality of a thing quite as much as that of a man or an apple tree. It is just that, as Klee said, to give the generating axis of a man the painter 'would have to have a network of lines so entangled that it could no longer be a question of a truly elementary representation.'[50]

In view of this situation two alternatives are open, and it makes little difference which one is chosen. First, the painter may, like Klee, decide to hold rigorously to the principle of the genesis of the visible, the principle of fundamental, indirect, or – as Klee used to say – absolute painting, and then leave it up to the *title* to designate by its prosaic name the entity thus constituted, in order to leave the painting free to function more purely as a painting. Or alternatively he may undertake, with Matisse (in his drawings), to put into a single line both the prosaic, identifying characteristics of the entity and the hidden operation which combines such indolence or inertia and such force in it as are required to constitute it as *nude*, as *face*, as *flower*.

There is a painting by Klee of two holly leaves, done in the most representational manner. At first glance the leaves are thoroughly indecipherable, and they remain to the end monstrous, unbelievable, ghostly, *on account of their exactness*. And Matisse's women (let us keep in mind his contemporaries' sarcasm) were not immediately women; they became women. It is Matisse who taught us to see his shapes not in a 'physical-optical' way but rather as structural filaments [*des nervures*], as the axes of a corporeal system of activity and passivity. Whether it be representational or nonrepresentational, the line is no longer a thing or an imitation of a thing. It is a certain disequilibrium contrived within the indifference of the white paper; it is a certain hollow opened up within the in-itself, a certain constitutive emptiness – an emptiness which, as Moore's statues show decisively, sustains the supposed positivity of things. The line is no longer the apparition of an entity upon a vacant background, as it was in classical geometry. It is, as in modern geometries, the restriction, segregation, or modulation of a pregiven spatiality.

Just as painting has created the latent line, it has made for itself a movement without displacement, a movement by vibration or radiation. And well it should, since, as they say, painting is an art of space, is carried out upon a canvas or sheet of paper and so lacks the wherewithal to devise things that actually move. But an immobile canvas could suggest a change of place, just as a shooting star's track on my retina suggests a transition, a motion not contained in it. The painting itself would then offer to my eyes almost the same thing offered them by real movements: a series of appropriately mixed, instantaneous glimpses along with, if a living thing is involved, attitudes unstably suspended between a before and an after – in short, the externals of a change of place which the spectator would read from the imprint it leaves. Here Rodin's well-known remark reveals its full weight: instantaneous glimpses, unstable attitudes petrify movement, as is shown by so many photographs in which an athlete-in-motion is forever frozen. We could not thaw him out by multiplying the glimpses. Marey's photographs, the cubists' analyses, Duchamp's *La Mariée* do not move; they give a Zenonian reverie on movement. We see a rigid body as if it were a piece of armor going through its motions; it is here and it is there, magically, but it does not *go* from here to there. Cinema portrays movement, but *how*? Is it, as we are inclined to believe, by copying more closely the changes of place? We may presume not, since slow motion shows a body being carried along, floating among objects like seaweed, but not *moving itself*.

Movement is given, says Rodin, by an image in which the arms, the legs, the trunk, and the head are each taken at a different instant, an image which therefore portrays the body in an attitude which it never at any instant really held and which imposes fictive linkages between the parts, as if this mutual confrontation of incompossibles could – and alone could – cause transition and duration to arise in bronze and on canvas.[51] The only successful instantaneous

glimpses of movement are those which approach this paradoxical arrangement – when, for example, a walking man or woman is taken at the moment when both feet are touching the ground; for then we almost have the temporal ubiquity of the body which brings it about that the person *bestrides* space. The picture makes movement visible by its internal discordance. Each member's position, precisely by virtue of its incompatibility with that of the others (according to the body's logic), is dated differently or is not 'in time' with the others; and since all of them remain visibly within the unity of one body, it is the body which comes to bestride duration. Its movement is something conspired between legs, trunk, arms, and head in some locus of virtuality, and it breaks forth only subsequently by actual change of place. When a horse is photographed at that instant when he is completely off the ground, with his legs almost folded under him – an instant, therefore, when he must be moving – why does he look as if he were leaping in place? And why, by contrast, do Géricault's horses really *run* on canvas, in a posture impossible for a real horse at a gallop? It is because the horses in *Epsom Derby* bring me to see the body's grip upon the ground and that, according to a logic of body and world I know well, these 'grips' upon space are also ways of taking hold of duration. Rodin said profoundly, 'It is the artist who is truthful, while the photograph lies; for, in reality, time never stops.'[52] The photograph keeps open the instants which the onrush of time closes up forthwith; it destroys the overtaking, the overlapping, the 'metamorphosis' [Rodin] of time. This is what painting, in contrast, makes visible, because the horses have in them that 'leaving here, going there,'[53] because they have a foot in each instant. Painting searches not for the outside of movement but for its secret ciphers, of which there are some still more subtle than those of which Rodin spoke. All flesh, and even that of the world, radiates beyond itself. But whether or not one is, depending on the era and the 'school,' attached more to manifest movement or the monumental, the art of painting is never altogether outside time, because it is always within the carnal.

Now perhaps we have a better sense of how much is contained in that little word 'see.' Seeing is not a certain mode of thought or presence to self; it is the means given me for being absent from myself, for being present from within at the fission of Being only at the end of which do I close up into myself.

Painters have always known this. Da Vinci invoked a 'pictorial science' which does not speak in words (and still less in numbers) but in works that exist in the visible just as natural things do – yet pass on that science 'to all the generations of the universe.'[54] A silent science, says Rilke (apropos of Rodin), that brings into the work the forms of things 'whose seal has not been broken'; it comes from the eye and addresses itself to the eye.[55] We must understand the eye as the 'window of the soul.' 'The eye … through which the beauty of the universe is revealed to our contemplation is of such excellence that whoever should resign himself to losing it would deprive himself of the knowledge of all the works of nature, the sight of which makes the soul live happily in its body's prison, thanks to the eyes which show him the infinite variety of creation: whoever loses them abandons his soul in a dark prison where all hope of once more seeing the sun, the light of the universe, must vanish.' The eye accomplishes the prodigious work of opening the soul to what is not soul – the joyous realm of things and their god, the sun.

A Cartesian can believe that the existing world is not visible, that the only light is of the mind, and that all vision takes place in God. A painter cannot agree that our openness to the world is illusory or indirect, that what we see is not the world itself, or that the mind has to do only with its thoughts or another mind. He accepts, with all its difficulties, the myth of the windows of the soul; what is without place must be subjected to a body – or, what is even more: what is without place must be initiated *by* the body to all the others and to nature. We must take literally what vision teaches us: namely, that through it we touch the sun and the stars, that we are everywhere at once, and that even our power to imagine ourselves elsewhere – 'I am in Petersburg in my

bed, in Paris, my eyes see the sun'[56] – or freely to envision real beings, wherever they are, borrows from vision and employs means we owe to it. Vision alone teaches us that beings that are different, 'exterior,' foreign to one another, are yet absolutely *together*, are 'simultaneity'; which is a mystery psychologists handle the way a child handles explosives. Robert Delaunay says succinctly, 'The railroad track is the image of succession which comes closest to the parallel: the parity of the rails.'[57] The rails converge and do not converge; they converge *in order to* remain equidistant farther away. The world is in accordance with my perspective *in order to* be independent of me, is for me in *order to be* without me, to be a world. The 'visual quale' gives me, and is alone in doing so, the presence of what is not me, of what *is* simply and fully.[58] It does so because, as a texture, it is the concretion of a universal visibility, of one sole Space that separates and reunites, that sustains every cohesion (and even that of past and future, since there would be no such cohesion if they were not essentially parts of the same space). Every visual something, as individual as it is, functions also as a dimension, because it is given as the result of a dehiscence of Being. What this ultimately means is that the hallmark of the visible is to have a lining of invisibility in the strict sense, which it makes present as a certain absence. 'In their time, our erstwhile opposites, the Impressionists, were perfectly right in electing domicile among the scrub and stubble of the daily spectacle. As for us, our heart throbs to get closer to the depths. … These oddities will become … realities … because instead of being limited to the diversely intense restoration of the visible, they also annex the occultly perceived portion of the invisible.'[59] There is that which reaches the eye head on, the frontal properties of the visible; but there is also that which reaches it from below – the profound postural latency whereby the body raises itself to see – and that which reaches vision from above like the phenomena of flight, of swimming, of movement, where it participates no longer in the heaviness of origins but in free accomplishments.[60] Through vision, then, the painter touches both extremities. In the immemorial depth of the visible, something has moved, caught fire, which engulfs his body; everything he paints is in answer to this incitement, and his hand is 'nothing but the instrument of a distant will.' Vision is the meeting, as at a crossroads, of all the aspects of Being. 'A certain fire wills to live; it wakes. Working its way along the hand's conductor, it reaches the canvas and invades it; then, a leaping spark, it arcs the gap in the circle it was to trace: the return to the eye, and beyond.'[61] There is no break at all in this circuit; it is impossible to say that here nature ends and the human being or expression begins. It is, then, silent Being that itself comes to show forth its own meaning. Herein lies the reason why the dilemma between figurative and nonfigurative art is wrongly posed; it is at once true and uncontradictory that no grape was ever what it is in the most figurative painting and that no painting, no matter how abstract, can get away from Being, that even Caravaggio's grape is the grape itself.[62] This precession of what is upon what one sees and makes seen, of what one sees and makes seen upon what is – this is vision itself. And to give the ontological formula of painting we hardly need to force the painter's own words, Klee's words written at the age of thirty-seven and ultimately inscribed on his tomb: 'I cannot be grasped in immanence.'[63]

V

Because depth, color, form, line, movement, contour, physiognomy are all branches of Being and because each entwines the tufts of all the rest, there are no separated, distinct 'problems' in painting, no really opposed paths, no partial 'solutions,' no cumulative progress, no irretrievable options. There is nothing to prevent the painter from going back to one of the emblems he has shied away from – making it, of course, speak differently. Rouault's contours are not those of Ingres. Light is the 'old sultana,' says Georges Limbour, 'whose charms withered away at the

beginning of this century.'[64] Expelled at first by the painters of matter, it reappears finally in Dubuffet as a certain texture of matter. One is never immune to these avatars or to the least expected convergences; some of Rodin's fragments are statues by Germaine Richier *because they were sculptors* – that is to say, enmeshed in a single, identical network of Being.

For the same reason nothing is ever finally acquired and possessed for good. In 'working over' a favorite problem, even if it is just the problem of velvet or wool, the true painter unknowingly upsets the givens of all the other problems. His quest is total even where it looks partial. Just when he has reached proficiency in some area, he finds that he has reopened another one where everything he said before must be said again in a different way. Thus what he has found he does not yet have. It remains to be sought out; the discovery itself calls forth still further quests. The idea of universal painting, of a totalization of painting, of painting's being fully and definitively accomplished is an idea bereft of sense. For painters, if any remain, the world will always be yet to be painted; even if it lasts millions of years … it will all end without having been completed.

Panofsky shows that the 'problems' of painting that structure its history are often solved obliquely, not in the course of inquiries instigated to solve them but, on the contrary, at some point when painters, having reached an impasse, apparently forget those problems and allow themselves to be attracted by other things. Then suddenly, their attention elsewhere, they happen upon the old problems and surmount the obstacle. This hidden historicity, advancing through the labyrinth by detours, transgression, slow encroachments and sudden drives, does not imply that the painter does not know what he wants, but that what he wants is on the hither side of means and goals, commanding and overseeing all our *useful* activity.

We are so fascinated by the classical idea of intellectual adequation that painting's mute 'thought' sometimes leaves us with the impression of a vain swirl of significations, a paralyzed or miscarried utterance. And if one answers that no thought ever detaches itself completely from a sustaining support; that the sole privilege of speaking thought is to have rendered its own support manageable; that the figurations of literature and philosophy are no more settled than those of painting and are no more capable of being accumulated into a stable treasure; that even science learns to recognize a zone of the 'fundamental,' peopled with dense, open, rent beings of which an exhaustive treatment is out of the question – like the cyberneticians' 'aesthetic information' or mathematico-physical 'groups of operations'; that, in the end, we are never in a position to take stock of everything objectively or to think of progress in itself; and that the whole of human history is, in a certain sense, stationary: *What*, says the understanding, like [Stendhal's] Lamiel, *is that all there is to it*? Is this the highest point of reason, to realize that the soil beneath our feet is shifting, to pompously call 'interrogation' what is only a persistent state of stupor, to call 'research' or 'quest' what is only trudging in a circle, to call 'Being' that which never fully is?

But this disappointment issues from that spurious fantasy[65] which claims for itself a positivity capable of making up for its own emptiness. It is the regret of not being everything, and a rather groundless regret at that. For if we cannot establish a hierarchy of civilizations or speak of progress – neither in painting nor even elsewhere – it is not because some fate impedes us; it is, rather, because the very first painting in some sense went to the farthest reach of the future. If no painting completes painting, if no work is itself ever absolutely completed, still, each creation changes, alters, clarifies, deepens, confirms, exalts, re-creates, or creates by anticipation all the others. If creations are not permanent acquisitions, it is not just that, like all things, they pass away: it is also that they have almost their entire lives before them.

Translated by Michael B. Smith

Notes

1 'L'oeil et l'esprit' was the last work Merleau-Ponty saw published. It appeared in the inaugural issue of *Art de France* 1, no. 1 (January 1961). After his death it was reprinted in *Les Temps Modernes*, pp. 184–85, along with seven articles devoted to him. It has now been published, in book form, by Gallimard (1964). Both the *Art de France* article and the book contain illustrations chosen by Merleau-Ponty. According to Professor Claude Lefort, 'L'oeil et l'esprit' is a preliminary statement of ideas that were to be developed in the second part of the book Merleau-Ponty was writing at the time of his death – *Le visible et l'invisible* (part of which was published posthumously by Gallimard in February 1964). The translator wishes to acknowledge his immense debt to George Downing, who spent many long hours working over the final revisions of the translation. Also, thanks are due to Michel Beaujour, Arleen B. Dallery, and Robert Reitter for their advice and encouragement. – *Trans*.

2 [Il est là, fort ou faible dans la vie, mais souverain sans conteste dans sa rumination du monde, sans autre 'technique' que celle que ses yeux et ses mains se donnent à force de voir, à force de peindre, acharné à tirer de ce monde où sonnent les scandales et les gloires de l'histoire des *toiles* qui n'ajouteront guère aux colères ni aux espoirs des hommes, et personne ne murmure.]

3 Cf. *Le visible et l'invisible*, Paris: Gallimard, 1964, pp. 273, 308–11. – *Trans*.

4 See *Signes*, Paris: Gallimard, 1960, pp. 210, 222–23, especially the footnotes, for a clarification of the 'circularity' at issue here. – *Trans*.

5 [Cet équivalent interne, cette formule charnelle de leur présence que les choses suscitent en moi, pourquoi à leur tour ne susciteraient-ils pas un tracé, visible encore, où tout autre regard retrouvera les motifs qui soutiennent son inspection du monde?]

6 G. Charbonnier, *Le monologue du peintre*, Paris, 1959, pp. 172.

7 [Beaucoup plus loin, puisque le tableau n'est un analogue que selon le corps, qu'il n'offre pas à l'esprit une occasion de repenser les rapports constitutifs des choses, mais au regard, pour qu'il les épouse, les traces de la vision du dedans, à la vision ce qui la tapisse intérieurement, la texture imaginaire du réel.]

8 Charbonnier, *Le monologue*, 34.

9 Ibid., 143–45.

10 '… une philosophie figurée.' Cf. Bergson (Ravaisson), note 46 below. – *Trans*.

11 P. Claudel, *Introduction à la peinture hollandaise*, Paris, 1935.

12 P. Schilder, *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*, London, 1935; New York, 1950, pp. 223–24. ['the body-image is not confined to the borderlines of one's own body. It transgresses them in the mirror. There is a body-image outside ourselves, and it is remarkable that primitive peoples even ascribe a substantial existence to the picture in the mirror' (p. 278). Schilder's earlier, shorter study, *Das Körperschema*, Berlin, 1923, is cited several times in *The Structure of Behavior* and in *Phenomenology of Perception*. Schilder's later work is of especial interest with regard to Merleau-Ponty's own elaborations of the meaning of the human body; it is worth examining for that reason, as well as for the chance it provides to discern some fundamental coincidences between Merleau-Ponty and certain American pragmatists.]

13 Cf. Schilder, *Image*, pp. 281–82. – *Trans*.

14 Robert Delaunay, *Du cubisme à l'art abstrait*, Paris, 1957.

15 'A minute in the world's life passes! to paint it in its reality! and forget everything for that. To become that minute, be the sensitive plate, … give the image of what we see, forgetting everything that has appeared before our time.' Cézanne, quoted in B. Dorival, *Paul Cézanne*, trans. H. H. A. Thackthwaite, London, 1948, p. 101. – *Trans*.

16 Descartes, *La Dioptrique*, Discours VII [conclusion]. Edition Adam et Tannery, VI, p. 165.

17 Ibid., Discours I. Adam et Tannery, p. 83. [*Oeuvres et lettres de Descartes*, ed. André Bridoux, Edition Pléiade, p. 181. Page references from the Bridoux selections have been added in the belief that this volume is more widely accessible today than the Adam and Tannery complete edition.]

18 Ibid., Adam et Tannery, p. 84. [Bridoux, p. 182.]

19 This paragraph continues the exposition of the *Dioptrics*. – *Trans*.
20 Ibid., Discours IV. Adam et Tannery, 112–14. [Bridoux, 203–4; in English, *Descartes: Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. N. Kemp Smith, Modern Library Edition), 145–47.]
21 Ibid., 130. [Bridoux, 217; Smith, 148.]
22 The system of means by which painting makes us see is a scientific matter. Why, then, do we not methodically produce perfect images of the world, arriving at a universal art purged of personal art, just as the universal language would free us of all the confused relationships that lurk in existent languages?
23 *Dioptrique*, Discours IV. [Note 20 above.]
24 Discours V of the *Dioptrique*, especially Descartes's diagrams, helps considerably to clarify this compressed passage. – *Trans*.
25 That is, the painting. – *Trans*.
26 E. Panofsky, *Die Perspektive als symbolische Form*, in *Vorträge der Bibliotek Warburg*, vol. 4 (1924–25).
27 Ibid. [The *Stilmoment*, or moment of an instituted style, does not dispense with the *Wermoment*, or moment of the individual perception. – *Trans*.]
28 Descartes, Discours IV, Adam et Tannery, 135. [Bridoux, 220; Smith, 154.] [Here is N. Kemp Smith's translation of the passage under discussion: 'Our knowledge of it (the situation of an object) does not depend on any image or action which comes to us from the object, but solely on the situation of the small parts of the brain whence the nerves take their origin. For this situation – a situation which changes with every change however small in the points at which these nerve-fibers are located – is instituted by nature in order to secure, not only that the mind be aware of the location of each part of the body which it animates, relatively to all the others, but also that it be able to transfer its attention to all the positions contained in the straight line that can be imaged as drawn from the extremity of each of these parts, and as prolonged to infinity.']
29 Ibid., Adam et Tannery, 137. [Bridoux, 222; Smith, 155. N. Kemp Smith's translation is given here.]
30 No doubt Merleau-Ponty is speaking of Princess Elizabeth, Descartes's correspondent. Cf. *Phénoménologie de la perception*, 230–32 (C. Smith translation, 198–99), and Descartes's letter to Elizabeth of 28 June 1643 (Bridoux, 1157–61). – *Trans*.
31 That is, the obscurity of the 'existential' order is just as necessary, just as grounded in God, as is the clarity of true thoughts ('nos lumières'). – *Trans*.
32 Cf. note 18, above. – *Trans*.
33 B. Dorival, *Paul Cézanne*, Paris, 1948, 103ff. [H. H. A. Thackthwaite's translation, London, 1948, pp. 101–3.]
34 Charbonnier, *Le monologue*, p. 176.
35 Delaunay, *Du cubisme*, p. 109.
36 F. Novotny, *Cézanne und das Ende der wissenschaftlichen Perspective*, Vienna, 1938.
37 W. Grohmann, *Paul Klee*, Paris, 1954, p. 141. [New York, 1956.]
38 Delaunay, *Du cubisme*, p. 118.
39 Klee, *Journal*. French trans. P. Klossowski, Paris, 1959.
40 George Schmidt, *Les aquarelles de Cézanne*, 21. [*The Watercolors of Cézanne*, New York, 1953.]
41 Klee, *Journal*.
42 'The spectacle is first of all a spectacle of itself before it is a spectacle of something outside of it.' – *Translator's note from Merleau-Ponty's 1961 lectures*.
43 C. P. Bru, *Esthétique de l'abstraction*, Paris, 1959, p. 99, p. 86.
44 Henri Michaux, *Aventures de lignes*.
45 Ibid.
46 Ravaisson, cited by Bergson, 'La vie et l'oeuvre de Ravaisson,' in *La pensée et le mouvant*, Paris, 1934, pp. 264–65. [The passage quoted here is from M. L. Andison's translation of that work, *The Creative Mind*, New York, 1946, p. 229. It remains moot whether these are Ravaisson's or da Vinci's words.]

47 Bergson, ibid.
48 Michaux, *Aventures de lignes*. ['laissé rêver une ligne.']
49 Ibid. ['d'aller ligne.']
50 Grohmann, *Paul Klee*, p. 192.
51 Rodin, *L'art*. Interviews collected by Paul Gsell, Paris, 1911.
52 Ibid., p. 86. Rodin uses the word 'metamorphosis,' quoted below.
53 Michaux, *Aventures de lignes*.
54 Cited by Delaunay, *Du cubisme*, p. 175.
55 Rilke, *Auguste Rodin*, French translation by Maurice Betz, Paris, 1928, p. 150. [English translation by Jessie Lamont and Hans Trausil, New York, 1919; republished 1945.]
56 Delaunay, *Du cubisme*, p. 115, p. 110.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Klee, *Conférence d'lena*, 1924, according to Grohmann, *Paul Klee*, p. 365.
60 Klee, *Wege des Naturstudiums*, 1923, as found in G. di San Lazzaro, *Klee*.
61 Klee, cited by Grohmann, *Paul Klee*, p. 99.
62 A. Berne-Joffroy, *Le dossier Caravage*, Paris, 1959, and Michel Butor, 'La Corbeille de l'Ambrosienne,' *Nouvelle Revue Française*, 1959, pp. 969–89.
63 Klee, *Journal*. ['Je suis insaisissable dans l'immanence.']
64 G. Limbour, *Tableau bon levain à vous de cuire la pâte: L'art brut de Jean Dubuffet*, Paris, 1953, pp. 54–55.
65 'Mais cette déception est celle du faux imaginaire, qui …'

Bibliography – major works by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in English

The Structure of Behaviour (1942), trans. A.L. Fisher, Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.
The Phenomenology of Perception (1945), trans. C. Smith, London: Routledge, 1978.
Humanism and Terror (1947), trans. J. O'Neill, Boston: Beacon Press, 1969.
Sense and Non-Sense (1948), trans. H.L. Dreyfus and P.A. Dreyfus, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964.
The World of Perception (1948), trans. O. Davis, London: Routledge, 2004.
Consciousness and the Acquisition of Language (1950), trans. H.J. Silverman, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973.
Adventures of the Dialectic (1955), trans. J. Bien, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973.
In Praise of Philosophy (1960), trans. J. Wild and J.M. Edie, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963.
Signs (1960), trans. R.C. McCleary, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964.
The Primacy of Perception, ed. J.M. Edie, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964.
The Visible and the Invisible (1964), ed. C. Lefort, trans. A. Lingis, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968.
The Prose of the World (1967), ed. C. Lefort, trans. J. O'Neill, London: Heinemann, 1974.
Themes from the Lectures at the Collège de France 1952–1960 (1968), trans. J. O'Neill, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970.
Texts and Dialogues: On Philosophy, Politics, and Culture, eds H.J. Silverman and J. Barry Jr., Amherst, New York: Humanities Press, 1992.
Nature (1995), trans. R. Vallier, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2003.
Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology, eds L. Lawlor and B. Bergo, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002.
The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader, ed. G.A. Johnson, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993.
Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings, ed. T. Baldwin, London: Routledge, 2004.
The Merleau-Ponty Reader, eds T. Toadvine and L. Lawlor, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007.

Further reading

Carman (2008), Diprose and Reynolds (2008), Flynn (2004), Matthews (2006), and Reynolds (2005a) and give introductions to Merleau-Ponty. Hass (2008), Matthews (2002), and Priest (2003) provide more critical overviews, while Carman and Hansen (2004), Dillon (1991), and Sallis (1981) present a collection of critical essays on different aspects of his philosophy. The significance of the body as an ontology is explored by Barbaras (2004), Dillon (1998), Fielding (1999), Fischer (2002), Lingis (1971), Madison (1989), Steeves (2004), and Watson (2007), with Al-Saji (2001), Ashbaugh (1978), Cataldi (1994), Chamarette (2007), Evans and Lawlor (2000), Macke (2007), Olkowski (2006), and Sanders (1999) concentrating upon the special meaning which is given to 'flesh'.

Merleau-Ponty's engagement with art, painting, and visual representation is considered by Collins (2010), Dunton (1999), Foti (1980, 1986, 1996), Johnson (1993, 2002), Semonovitch and DeRoo (2010), Toadvine (1997), Widdershoven (1999), and Willsdon (1998), with Carvalho (1993), Cazeaux (2007), Lingis (1981), and Vasseleu (1998) assessing what the senses become within his aesthetics.

Feminist reception of his work is addressed by Ainley (1997) and Olkowski and Weiss (2006), and comparisons with other recent philosophies are provided by Erdinast-Vulcan (2007), Reynolds (2005b), and Watkin (2009).

A. Ainley, '"The invisible of the flesh": Merleau-Ponty and Irigaray', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 1997, vol. 28, pp. 20–29.

A. Al-Saji, 'Merleau-Ponty and Bergson: bodies of expression and temporalities in the flesh', *Philosophy Today*, 2001, vol. 45, pp. 110–23.

A.F. Ashbaugh, 'The philosophy of flesh and the flesh of philosophy', *Research in Phenomenology*, 1978, vol. 8, pp. 217–23.

R. Barbaras, *The Being of the Phenomenon: Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, trans. T. Toadvine and L. Lawlor, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2004.

T. Carman, *Merleau-Ponty*, New York: Routledge, 2008.

T. Carman and M.B.N. Hansen, *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

J. Carvalho, 'The visible and the invisible in Merleau-Ponty and Foucault', *International Studies in Philosophy*, 1993, vol. 25, pp. 35–46.

S.L. Cataldi, *Emotion, Depth, and Flesh: A Study of Sensitive Space – Reflections on Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Embodiment*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994.

C. Cazeaux, 'Sensation, categorization, and embodiment: Locke, Merleau-Ponty, and Lakoff and Johnson', in *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy: From Kant to Derrida*, New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 56–79.

J. Chamarette, 'Flesh, folds and texturality: thinking visual ellipsis via Merleau-Ponty, Hélène Cixous and Robert Frank', *Paragraph*, 2007, vol. 30, pp. 34–49.

L. Collins, 'The wild being of Louise Bourgeois: Merleau-Ponty in the flesh', *Romance Studies*, 2010, vol. 28, pp. 47–56.

M.C. Dillon (ed.), *Merleau-Ponty Vivant*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991.

———, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, 2nd edn, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998.

R. Diprose and J. Reynolds (eds), *Merleau-Ponty: Key Concepts*, Durham: Acumen, 2008.

C. Dunton, 'Meaning and appearance: a Merleau-Pontian account of Leonardo's studies from life', *Art History*, 1999, vol. 22, pp. 331–46.

D. Erdinast-Vulcan, 'That which "has no name in philosophy": Merleau-Ponty and the language of literature', *Human Studies*, 2007, vol. 30, pp. 395–409.

F. Evans and L. Lawlor (eds), *Chiasms: Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.

H. Fielding, 'Depth of embodiment: spatial and temporal bodies in Foucault and Merleau-Ponty', *Philosophy Today*, 1999, vol. 43, pp. 73–85.

S. Fischer, 'Ecology of the flesh: Gestalt ontology in Merleau-Ponty and Naess', *International Studies in Philosophy*, 2002, vol. 34, pp. 53–68.

B. Flynn, 'Maurice Merleau-Ponty', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2004. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/merleau-ponty/ (accessed 22 July 2010).

V.M. Foti, 'Painting and the reorientation of philosophical thought in Merleau-Ponty', *Philosophy Today*, 1980, vol. 24, pp. 114–20.

———, 'Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's turn from technicity to art', *Philosophy Today*, 1986, vol. 30, pp. 306–16.

——— (ed.), *Merleau-Ponty: Difference, Materiality, Painting*, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996.
L. Hass, *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008.
G.A. Johnson (ed.), *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993.
———, 'The invisible and the unpresentable: Barnett Newman's abstract expressionism and the aesthetics of Merleau-Ponty', *Analecta Husserliana*, 2002, vol. 75, pp. 179–90.
A. Lingis, 'Intentionality and corporeity', *Analecta Husserliana*, 1971, vol. 1, pp. 75–90.
———, 'Sensations', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 1981, vol. 42, pp. 160–70.
F.J. Macke, 'Body, liquidity, and flesh: Bachelard, Merleau-Ponty, and the elements of interpersonal communication', *Philosophy Today*, 2007, vol. 51, pp. 401–15.
G.B. Madison, *The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty: A Search for the Limits of Consciousness*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1989.
E. Matthews, *The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty*, Durham: Acumen, 2002.
———, *Merleau-Ponty: A Guide for the Perplexed*, London: Continuum, 2006.
D. Olkowski, 'Maurice Merleau-Ponty: intertwining and objectification', *PhaenEx*, 2006, vol. 1, pp. 113–39.
D. Olkowski and G. Weiss (eds), *Feminist Interpretations of Maurice Merleau-Ponty*, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006.
S. Priest, *Merleau-Ponty*, London: Routledge, 2003.
J. Reynolds, 'Maurice Merleau-Ponty', *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, eds J. Fieser and B. Dowden, 2005a. Online. Available HTTP: http://www.iep.utm.edu/merleau/ (accessed 22 July 2010).
———, *Merleau-Ponty and Derrida: Intertwining Embodiment and Alterity*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2005b.
J. Sallis (ed.), *Merleau-Ponty: Perception, Structure, Language*, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1981.
M. Sanders, 'From time to the flesh: Levinas and Merleau-Ponty', *Philosophy Today*, 1999, vol. 43, pp. 146–53.
K. Semonovitch and N. DeRoo (eds), *Merleau-Ponty at the Limits of Art, Religion, and Perception*, London: Continuum, 2010.
J.B. Steeves, *Imagining Bodies: Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Imagination*, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2004.
T. Toadvine, 'The art of doubting: Merleau-Ponty and Cézanne', *Philosophy Today*, 1997, vol. 41, pp. 545–53.
C. Vasseleu, *Textures of Light: Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty*, London: Routledge, 1998.
C. Watkin, *Phenomenology or Deconstruction? The Question of Ontology in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur and Jean-Luc Nancy*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.
S.H. Watson, 'Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological itinerary from body schema to situated knowledge: on how we are and how we are not to "sing the world"', *Janus Head*, 2007, vol. 9, pp. 525–50.
G.A.M. Widdershoven, 'Truth and meaning in art: Merleau-Ponty's ambiguity', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 1999, vol. 30, pp. 229–38.
D. Willsdon, 'Merleau-Ponty on the expression of nature in art', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 1998, vol. 29, pp. 207–14.

Chapter 26

JEAN BAUDRILLARD

INTRODUCTION

In Baudrillard's writing, the play of language not only frustrates any attempt to refer to the real but also changes the real to the point where the distinction between representation and reality no longer applies. Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007) is *the* philosopher of the late twentieth-century digital media circus. Information generation and hype, he asserts, have achieved self-reference and integration to the extent that it is no longer possible to talk about a 'real' world existing independently of representation. His interest in the ontology or 'shape' of contemporary Western culture arises from his early fusion of Marxism and structuralism in the theorization of sign-systems.[1] Here, the capacity of a sign to acquire a significance over and above its original role as a token of worldly, social interaction is related by Baudrillard to the autonomy an object acquires as a gift or a sellable commodity distinct from the labour which produced it. The transformation is ontological: from 'relationship' – working with materials – to 'object' – an independent item. As an autonomous thing, the sign or the image ceases to be subservient to a governing intention or reality and, instead, becomes an active, world-shaping entity.

Baudrillard's essay 'The Evil Demon of Images' (1984) draws out the interwoven nature of image and reality in relation to contemporary cinema and visual media. The title is a reference to the 'evil demon' introduced by Descartes in his 'Meditations on First Philosophy' as a doubt-maximizing device, part of his endeavour to establish what can be known beyond all doubt.[2] Descartes entertains the possibility that the world might not exist at all but in fact be a delusion created by the demon. It is this 'loss of reality' thesis that interests Baudrillard. Experience has become saturated with media imagery to the point that we can say, for example, that the Vietnam war 'in itself' never happened. Baudrillard makes this claim in relation to Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. (He makes the same argument in 1991 in relation to the first Gulf War, claiming it does not exist as 'an event' outside or independent of the frenzied news coverage.)[3] The war was 'staged' with 'the same exaggeration, the same excessive means, the same monstrous candour' as the production of the film. The primary motive for the war, he suggests, was not justice or the defeat of an enemy but 'the sacrificial, excessive deployment of a power already filming itself as it unfolds'. Thus, cause and effect become 'scrambled'. Representation, that which traditionally *follows* reality as its impression or after-image, begins to impinge upon and change the world. Our condition is one of 'hyperreality': representation creates the world or, rather, creates worlds. It gives us images and events with lives of their own which then become templates for new realities. We aspire to them or use them as filters to colour our own being. How often do we *picture* our situation as a scene from a film or have a soundtrack running in our heads? It is no longer the case that we have simulation (or representation) and reality; rather, there are now only 'simulacra':

information-led events which give the impression of objective content through their own short-circuiting of reality, through their own logic of mutual reflection and imbrication.

Much of Baudrillard's polemic depends upon how novel one finds his treatment of the 'real'. Reality conceived as a mind-independent domain of things, unaltered by perception, is one of modern philosophy's most problematic concepts, and has been regularly challenged or reworked ever since Kant. Baudrillard's notion of a perception-soaked reality, or 'simulacrum', is already present in the Kantian thesis that human faculties shape the world. However, this is not to deny Baudrillard his contemporary relevance. Advances in information technology are constantly adding to and changing the forms representation can take, and Baudrillard's arguments stand as crucial, critical responses to media saturation.

Notes

1 See, for example, J. Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. C. Levin, St. Louis: Telos Press, 1981, and *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, trans. I. Grant, London: Sage, 1993.
2 R. Descartes, 'Meditations on first philosophy', in *Selected Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, and D. Murdoch, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 79–81.
3 See J. Baudrillard, 'The reality gulf', *The Guardian*, 11 January 1991, and '*La guerre du Golfe n'a pas en lieu*' ('The Gulf War has not taken place'), *Liberation*, 29 March 1991.

THE EVIL DEMON OF IMAGES

JEAN BAUDRILLARD

A propos the cinema and images in general (media images, technological images), I would like to conjure up the perversity of the relation between the image and its referent, the supposed real; the virtual and irreversible confusion of the sphere of images and the sphere of a reality whose nature we are less and less able to grasp. There are many modalities of this absorption, this confusion, this diabolical seduction of images. Above all, it is the reference principle of images which must be doubted, this strategy by means of which they always appear to refer to a real world, to real objects, and to reproduce something which is logically and chronologically anterior to themselves. None of this is true. As simulacra, images precede the real to the extent that they invert the causal and logical order of the real and its reproduction. Benjamin, in his essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', already pointed out strongly this modern revolution in the order of production (of reality, of meaning) by the precession, the anticipation of its reproduction.

It is precisely when it appears most truthful, most faithful and most in conformity to reality that the image is most diabolical – and our technical images, whether they be from photography, cinema or television, are in the overwhelming majority much more 'figurative', 'realist', than all the images from past cultures. It is in its resemblance, not only analogical but technological, that the image is most immoral and most perverse.

The appearance of the mirror already introduced into the world of perception an ironical effect of *trompe-l'œil*, and we know what malefice was attached to the appearance of doubles. But this is also true of all the images which surround us: in general, they are analysed according to their value as representations, as media of presence and meaning. The immense majority of present day photographic, cinematic and television images are thought to bear witness to the

world with a naive resemblance and a touching fidelity. We have spontaneous confidence in their realism. We are wrong. They only seem to resemble things, to resemble reality, events, faces. Or rather, they really do conform, but their conformity itself is diabolical.

We can find a sociological, historical and political equivalent to this diabolical conformity, to this evil demon of conformity, in the modern behaviour of the masses who are also very good at complying with the models offered to them, who are very good at reflecting the objectives imposed on them, thereby absorbing and annihilating them. There is in this conformity a force of seduction in the literal sense of the word, a force of diversion, distortion, capture and ironic fascination. There is a kind of fatal strategy of conformity.

A recent example may be found in Woody Allen's film, *Zelig*: in trying to be oneself, to cultivate difference and originality, one ends up resembling everyone and no longer seducing anyone. This is the logic of present day psychological conformity. Zelig, on the other hand, is launched on an adventure of total seduction, in an involuntary strategy of global seduction: he begins to resemble everything which approaches him, everything which surrounds him. Nor is this the mimetic violence of defiance or parody, it is the mimetic non-violence of seduction. To begin to resemble the other, to take on their appearance, is to seduce them, since it is to make them enter the realm of metamorphosis despite themselves.

This seductive force, this fatal strategy, is a kind of animal genie or talent – not simply that of the chameleon, which is only its anecdotal form. It is not the conformism of animals which delights us; on the contrary, animals are never conformist, they are seductive, they always appear to result from a metamorphosis. Precisely because they are not individuals, they pose the enigma of their resemblance. If an animal knows how to conform, it is not to its own being, its own individuality (banal strategy), but to appearances in the world. This is what Zelig does too with his animal genie – he is polymorphous (but not perverse); he is incapable of functional adaptation to contexts, which is true conformism, our conformism, but able to seduce by the *play* of resemblance. Savages do no less when they put on the successive masks of their gods, when they 'become' their successive divinities – this is also to seduce them. It is of course against this strategy of seduction that psychiatry struggles, and it is what gives rise to the magical infatuation of the crowds for Zelig (in German, *selig* means 'blessed').

The remarkable thing about this film is that it leads astray all possible interpretations. There is thus also a seduction of interpretation, with the complicity of certain intellectuals, as well as a polymorphous montage technique which allows it to ironically adapt to all possibilities.

More generally, the image is interesting not only in its role as reflection, mirror, representation of, or counterpart to, the real, but also when it begins to contaminate reality and to model it, when it only conforms to reality the better to distort it, or better still: when it appropriates reality for its own ends, when it anticipates it to the point that the real no longer has time to be produced as such.

It is not only daily life which has become cinematographic and televisual, but war as well. It has been said that war is the continuation of politics by other means; we can also say that images, media images, are the continuation of war by other means. Take *Apocalypse Now*. Coppola made his film the same way the Americans conducted the war – in this sense, it is the best possible testimony – with the same exaggeration, the same excessive means, the same monstrous candour … and the same success. War as a trip, a technological and psychedelic fantasy; war as a succession of special effects, the war become film well before it was shot; war replaced by technological testing. For the Americans, it was above all the latter: a test site, an enormous field on which to test their weapons, their methods, their power.

Coppola does the same thing: he tests the power of intervention of cinema, tests the impact of cinema become a vast machine of special effects. In this sense his film is very much

the prolongation of war by other means, the completion of that incomplete war, its apotheosis. War becomes film, film becomes war, the two united by their mutual overflow of technology.

The real war was conducted by Coppola in the manner of Westmoreland. Leaving aside the clever irony of napalming Philippino forests and villages to recreate the hell of South Vietnam, everything is replayed, begun again through cinema: the Molochian joy of the shoot, the sacrificial joy of so many millions spent, of such a holocaust of means, of so many difficulties, and the dazzling paranoia in the mind of the creator who, from the beginning, conceived this film as a *world* historical event for which the Vietnam war would have been no more than a pretext, would ultimately not have existed – and we cannot deny it: 'in itself' the Vietnam war never happened, perhaps it was only a dream, a baroque dream of napalm and the tropics, a psychotropic dream in which the issue was not politics or victory but the sacrificial, excessive deployment of a power already filming itself as it unfolds, perhaps expecting nothing more than consecration by a superfilm, which perfects the war's function as a mass spectacle.

No real distance, no critical direction, no desire for any 'raised consciousness' in relation to the war: in a sense this is the brutal quality of the film, not to be undermined by any anti-war moral psychology. Coppola may very well dress up his helicopter captain in a cavalry hat and have him wipe out a Vietnamese village to the sound of Wagner – these are not critical, distant signs; they are immersed in the machinery, part of the special effect. Coppola makes films in the same manner, with the same nostalgic megalomania, with the same non-signifying fury, the same magnified Punch and Judy effect. One can ask, how is such a horror possible (not the war, properly speaking, but that of the film)? But there is no response, no possible judgement. The Vietnam war and the film are cut from the same cloth, nothing separates them: this film is part of the war. If the Americans (apparently) lost the other, they have certainly won this one. *Apocalypse Now* is a global victory. It has a cinematographic power equal and superior to that of the military and industrial complexes, of the Pentagon and governments. Nothing is understood in relation to war or cinema (at least the latter) unless one has grasped this indistinguishability – which is not the ideological or moral indistinguishability of good and evil, but that of the reversibility of destruction and production, of the immanence of something in its very revolution, of the organic metabolism of every technology, from carpet bombing to film stock … .

As for the anticipation of reality by images, the precession of images and media in relation to events, such that the connection between cause and effect becomes scrambled and it becomes impossible to tell which is the effect of the other – what better example than the nuclear accident at Harrisburg, a 'real' incident which happened just after the release of *The China Syndrome*? This film is a fine example of the supremacy of the televised event over the nuclear event which itself remains improbable and in some sense imaginary.

Moreover, the film unintentionally shows this: it is the intrusion of TV into the reactor which as it were triggers the nuclear incident – because it is the anticipation and model of it in the day to day world: telefission of the real and of the real world – because TV and information in general are a kind of catastrophe in René Thom's formal, topological sense: a radical, qualitative change in an entire system. Or rather, TV and nuclear power are of the same kind: behind the 'hot' and negentropic concepts of energy and information, they have the same dissuasive force as cold systems. TV is also a nuclear, chain-reactive process, but implosive: it cools and neutralises the meaning and energy of events. Thus, behind the presumed risk of explosion, that is, of hot catastrophe, the nuclear conceals a long, cold catastrophe – the universalisation of a system of dissuasion, of deterrence.

The homology between nuclear power and television can be read directly in the images. Nothing resembles the command and control centre of the reactor more than the TV studios, and the nuclear consoles share the same imaginary as the recording and broadcasting studios. Everything happens between these two poles: the other core, that of the reactor, in principal

the real core of the affair, remains concealed from us, like the real; buried and indecipherable, ultimately of no importance. The drama is acted out on the screens and nowhere else.

Harrisburg, Watergate and *Network* form the trilogy of *The China Syndrome* – an inextricable trilogy in which we cannot tell which is the effect or the symptom of the others: is the ideological argument (the Watergate effect) only the symptom of the nuclear (the Harrisburg effect) or the informational model (the *Network* effect)? – is the real (Harrisburg) only the symptom of the imaginary (*Network*, *The China Syndrome*) or vice versa? Marvellous indistinguishability, ideal constellation of simulation.

The conjunction of *The China Syndrome* and Harrisburg haunts us. But is it so involuntary? Without examining any magical links between simulacrum and reality, it is clear that *The China Syndrome* is not unrelated to the 'real' accident at Harrisburg, not by a causal logic but by those relations of contagion and unspoken analogy which link the real, models and simulacra: the induction of the nuclear incident at Harrisburg by the film corresponds, with disquieting obviousness, to the induction of the incident by TV in the film. A strange precession of a film before the real, the most astonishing we have seen: reality corresponding point by point to the simulacra, even down to the suspensive, incomplete character of the catastrophe, which is essential from the point of view of dissuasion: the real so arranged itself, in the image of the film, as to produce a *simulation* of catastrophe.

It is only a further step, which we should briskly take, to reverse our logical order and see *The China Syndrome* as the real event and Harrisburg its simulacrum. For it is by the same logic that the nuclear reality in the film follows from the television effect and Harrisburg in 'reality' follows from the cinema effect of *The China Syndrome*.

But the latter is not the original prototype of Harrisburg; one is not the simulacrum and the other the reality: there are only simulacra, and Harrisburg is a kind of simulation in the second degree. There is indeed a chain reaction; but *it is not the nuclear chain reaction but that of the simulacra* and of the simulation in which all the energy of the real is effectively engulfed, not in a spectacular nuclear explosion but in a secret and continuous implosion, which is perhaps taking a more deadly turn than all the explosions which presently lull us.

For an explosion is always a promise, it *is* our hope: see how much, in the film as well as at Harrisburg, everyone expects it to go up, that destruction speak its name and deliver us from this unnameable panic, from this invisible nuclear panic of dissuasion. Let the 'core' of the reactor expose at last its glowing power of destruction, let it reassure us as to the admittedly catastrophic presence of energy and gratify us with its spectacle. For the problem is that there is no nuclear spectacle, no spectacle of nuclear energy in itself (Hiroshima is past): it is for this reason that it is rejected – it would be perfectly accepted if it lent itself to spectacle like earlier forms of energy. Parousia of catastrophe: substantial boost to our messianic libido.

But that will never recur. What will happen will never be explosion but implosion. Never again will we see energy in its spectacular and pathetic form – all the romanticism of explosion which had so much charm, since it was also that of revolution – but only the cold energy of simulacra and its distillation in homeopathic doses into the cold systems of information.

What else does the media dream of if not raising up events by its very presence? Everyone deplores it, but everyone is secretly fascinated by this eventuality. Such is the logic of simulacra: no longer divine predestination, but the precession of models, which is no less inexorable. And it is for this reason that events no longer have any meaning: not because they are insignificant in themselves, but because they have been preceded by models with which their own process can only coincide.

For some time now, in the dialectical relation between reality and images (that is, the relation that we wish to believe dialectical, readable from the real to the image and vice versa), the image has taken over and imposed its own immanent, ephemeral logic; an immoral logic without depth,

beyond good and evil, beyond truth and falsity; a logic of the extermination of its own referent, a logic of the implosion of meaning in which the message disappears on the horizon of the medium. In this regard, we all remain incredibly naive: we always look for a good usage of the image, that is to say a moral, meaningful, pedagogic or informational usage, without seeing that the image in a sense revolts against this good usage, that it is the conductor neither of meaning nor good intentions, but on the contrary of an implosion, a denegation of meaning (of events, history, memory, etc.). I am reminded of *Holocaust*, the television series on the concentration camps …

Forgetting the extermination is part of the extermination itself. That forgetting, however, is still too dangerous and must be replaced by an artificial memory (everywhere, today, it is artificial memories which obliterate people's memories, which obliterate people from memory). This artificial memory replays the extermination – but too late for it to profoundly unsettle anything, and above all it does so via a medium which is itself cold, radiating oblivion, dissuasion and extermination in an even more systematic manner, if this is possible, than the camps themselves. TV, the veritable final solution to the historicity of every event. The Jews are recycled not through the crematory ovens or the gas chambers but through the sound track and images, through the cathode tube and the micro-chip. Forgetting, annihilation thereby achieves at last an aesthetic dimension – nostalgia gives them their final finish.

Henceforth, 'everyone knows', everyone has trembled before the extermination – a sure sign that 'it' will never happen again. But in effect what is thus exorcised so cheaply, at the cost of a few tears, will never recur because it is presently happening in the very form through which it is denounced, through the very medium of this supposed exorcism: television. The same process of forgetting, of liquidation, of extermination, the same annihilation of memories and of history, the same inverse, implosive radiation, the same absorption without trace, the same black hole as Auschwitz. They want us to believe that TV will remove the mortgage of Auschwitz by raising collective consciousness, whereas it is the perpetuation of it in a different guise, under the auspices not of a site of annihilation but a *medium* of dissuasion.

What everyone fails to understand is that *Holocaust* is above all (and exclusively) a *televised* event or rather object (McLuhan's fundamental rule which must not be forgotten). That is to say, it is an attempt to reheat a *cold* historical event – tragic but cold, the first great event of cold systems, those cooling systems of dissuasion and extermination which were subsequently deployed in other forms (including the Cold War, etc.) and in relation to the cold masses (the Jews no longer even concerned by their own death, eventually self-managing it, no longer even masses in revolt: dissuaded unto death, dissuaded even of their own death). To reheat this cold event via a cold medium, television, for masses who are themselves cold, who will only find in it the occasion for a tactile chill and a posthumous emotion, a dissuasive shiver, which sends them into oblivion with a kind of aesthetic good faith.

The cold light of television is inoffensive to the imagination (even that of children) since it no longer carries any imaginary, for the simple reason that *it is no longer an image*.

In this sense the TV image has to be placed in opposition to the cinema, which still carries an intense imaginary. Although it is contaminated more and more by TV, the cinema is still an image – that means not only a screen and a visual form but a myth, something that belongs to the sphere of the double, the phantasm, the mirror, the dream, etc. … Nothing of that in the TV image, which doesn't suggest anything and has a magnetic effect. The TV image is only a screen. More than that: a miniaturized terminal located in your head and you are the screen and the TV looks at you, goes through you like a magnetic tape – a tape, not an image.

Thus, properly speaking it is *Holocaust* the television film which constitutes the definitive holocaust event. Likewise, with *The Day After* it is not the atomic conflict depicted in the film but the film itself which is the catastrophic event.

This film should inspire a salutary terror, it should dissuade by the spectacle of terror. However, I don't see anything as a result of this film. The slides at the New York Museum of Natural History move me much more profoundly: you can shiver at the ice age and feel the charm of the prehistoric, but here I feel neither the shiver nor the charm of nuclear power, nor even suspense nor the final blinding flash.

Is it a bad film? Certainly. But isn't it rather that all this is unimaginable? Isn't it rather that, in our imaginary, nuclear conflict is a total event, without appeal and with no tomorrow, whereas here it simply brings about a regression of the human race according to the worst naive stereotypes of savagery? But we already know that state, indeed we have barely left it. Our desire is rather for something which no longer takes place on a human scale, for some anterior or ulterior mystery: what will the earth be like when we are no longer on it? In a word, we dream of our disappearance, and of seeing the world in its inhuman purity (which is precisely not the state of nature).

But these limits, these extremes that we imagine, this catastrophe – can it be metaphorised in images? It is not certain that its mythical evocation is possible, any more than that of our bio-molecular destiny or that of the genetic code, which is the other dimension, the corollary of the nuclear. We can no longer be affected by it – proof that we have already been irradiated! Already to our minds the catastrophe is no more than a comic strip. Its filmic projection is only a diversion from the real nuclearisation of our lives. The real nuclear catastrophe has already happened, it happens every day, and this film is part of it. It is it which is our catastrophe. It does not represent it, it does not evoke it, on the contrary it shows that it has already happened, that it is already here, since it is impossible to imagine.

For all these reasons I do not believe in a pedagogy of images, nor of cinema, nor *a fortiori* in one of television. I do not believe in a dialectic between image and reality, nor therefore, in respect of images, in a pedagogy of message and meaning. The secret of the image (we are still speaking of contemporary, technical images) must not be sought in its differentiation from reality, and hence in its representative value (aesthetic, critical or dialectical), but on the contrary in its 'telescoping' into reality, its short-circuit with reality, and finally, in the implosion of image and reality. For us there is an increasingly definitive lack of differentiation between image and reality which no longer leaves room for representation as such.

This collusion between images and life, between the screen and daily life, can be experienced every day in the most ordinary manner. Especially in America, not the least charm of which is that even outside the cinemas the whole country is cinematographic. You cross the desert as if in a western; the metropolis is a continual screen of signs and formulae. Life is a travelling shot, a kinetic, cinematic, cinematographic sweep. There is as much pleasure in this as in those Dutch or Italian towns where, upon leaving the museum, you rediscover a town in the very image of the paintings, as if it had stepped out of them. It is a kind of miracle which, even in a banal American way, gives rise to a sort of aesthetic form, to an ideal confusion which transfigures life, as in a dream. Here, cinema does not take on the exceptional form of a work of art, even a brilliant one, but invests the whole of life with a mythical ambience. Here it becomes truly exciting. This is why the idolatry of stars, the cult of Hollywood idols, is not a media pathology but a glorious form of the cinema, its mythical transfiguration, perhaps the last great myth of our modernity. Precisely to the extent that the idol no longer represents anything but reveals itself as a pure, impassioned, contagious image which effaces the difference between the real being and its assumption into the imaginary.

All these considerations are a bit wild, but that is because they correspond to the unrestrained film buff that I am and have always wished to remain – that is in a sense uncultured and fascinated. There is a kind of primal pleasure, of anthropological joy in images, a kind of brute fascination

unencumbered by aesthetic, moral, social or political judgements. It is because of this that I suggest they are immoral, and that their fundamental power lies in this immorality.

This brute fascination for images, above and beyond all moral or social determination, is also not that of dreaming or the imaginary, understood in the traditional sense. Other images, such as those in painting, drawing, theatre or architecture, have been better able to make us dream or imagine; other modes of expression as well (undoubtedly language makes us dream better than the image). So there is something more than that which is peculiar to our modern media images: if they fascinate us so much it is not because they are sites of the production of meaning and representation – this would not be new – it is on the contrary because they are sites of the *disappearance* of meaning and representation, sites in which we are caught quite apart from any judgement of reality, thus sites of a fatal strategy of denegation of the real and of the reality principle.

We have arrived at a paradox regarding the image, our images, those which unfurl upon and invade our daily life – images whose proliferation, it should be noted, is potentially infinite, whereas the extension of meaning is always limited precisely by its end, by its finality: from the fact that images ultimately have no finality and proceed by total contiguity, infinitely multiplying themselves according to an irresistible epidemic process which no one today can control, our world has become truly infinite, or rather exponential by means of images. It is caught up in a mad pursuit of images, in an ever greater fascination which is only accentuated by video and digital images. We have thus come to the paradox that these images describe the equal impossibility of the real and of the imaginary.

For us the medium, the image medium, has imposed itself between the real and the imaginary, upsetting the balance between the two, with a kind of fatality which has its own logic. I call this a fatal process in the sense that there is a definitive immanence of the image, without any possible transcendent meaning, without any possible dialectic of history – fatal also in the sense not merely of an exponential, linear unfolding of images and messages but of an exponential enfolding of the medium around itself. The fatality lies in this endless enwrapping of images (literally: without end, without destination) which leaves images no other destiny than images. The same thing happens everywhere today, when production has no destiny apart from production – overdetermination of production by itself – when sex has no destiny other than sex – sexual overdetermination of sexuality. This process may be found everywhere today, for better and for worse. In the absence of rules of the game, things become caught up in their own game: images become more real than the real; cinema itself becomes more cinema than cinema, in a kind of vertigo in which (to return to our initial problem, that of resemblance) it does no more than resemble itself and escape in its own logic, in the very perfection of its own model.

I am thinking of those exact, scrupulous set-pieces such as *Chinatown*, *The Day of the Condor*, *Barry Lyndon*, *1900*, *All the President's Men*, the very perfection of which is disturbing. It is as if we were dealing with perfect remakes, with extraordinary montages which belong more to a combinatory process (or mosaic in the McLuhanesque sense), with large photo, kino or historio-synthetic machines, rather than with real films. Let us be clear: their quality is not in question. The problem is rather that they leave us somehow totally indifferent.

Take *The Last Picture Show*. You need only be sufficiently distracted, as I was, to see it as a 1950s original production: a good film of manners and the ambience of small town America, etc. A slight suspicion: it was a little too good, better adjusted, better than the others, without the sentimental, moral and psychological tics of the films of that period. Astonishment at the discovery that it is a 1970s film, perfectly nostalgic, brand new, retouched, a hyperrealist restitution of a '50s film. There is talk of remaking silent films, doubtless better than those of the period. A whole generation of films is appearing which will be to those we have known what the android is to man: marvellous, flawless artifacts, dazzling simulacra which lack only an imaginary and that particular

hallucination which makes cinema what it is. Most of those that we see today (the best) are already of this order. *Barry Lyndon* is the best example: no better has been made, no better will be made, but what exactly? Evocation? No, not even evocation but *simulation*. All the toxic radiation has been filtered out, all the ingredients are present in precise doses, not a single mistake.

Cool, cold pleasure which is not even aesthetic properly speaking: functional pleasure, equational pleasure, pleasure of machination. We need only think of Visconti (*The Leopard*, *Senso*, etc., which recall *Barry Lyndon* in certain respects) in order to grasp the difference, not only in style but in the cinematographic act. With Visconti, there is meaning, history, a sensual rhetoric, dead moments, a passionate game, not only in the historical content but in the direction. None of that with Kubrick, who controls his film like a chessboard, and makes history an operational scenario. Nor does this refer back to the old opposition between finesse and geometry: there meaning was still in play, meaning was at stake. Whereas we are entering into an era of films which no longer have meaning properly speaking, large synthetic machines with variable geometry.

Is there already something of this in Sergio Leone's westerns? Perhaps. All registers tend in this direction. *Chinatown* is the detective story redesigned by laser. It is not really a question of perfection. Technical perfection can *belong* to the meaning, and in this case it is neither nostalgic nor hyperrealist; it is an effect of art. Here, it is an effect of model: it is one of the tactical reference values. In the absence of any real syntax of meaning there are only *tactical* values in a complex whole in which, for example, the CIA as an all-purpose mythological machine, Robert Redford as a polyvalent star, social relations as necessary references to history, and *technical virtuosity as a necessary reference to cinema* are all admirably combined.

Cinema and its trajectory: from the most fantastic or mythical to the realistic and hyperrealistic.

In its present endeavours cinema increasingly approaches, with ever increasing perfection, absolute reality: in its banality, in its veracity, in its starkness, in its tedium, and at the same time in its pretentiousness, in its pretension to be the real, the immediate, the unsignified, which is the maddest of enterprises (in the same way that the pretension of functionalist design to designate, as the highest degree of the object, the form in which it coincides with its function, its use-value, is properly an insane enterprise). No culture has ever had this naive and paranoiac, this puritanical and terrorist vision of signs. Terrorism is always of the real. Simultaneous with this attempt at absolute coincidence with the real, cinema also approaches an absolute coincidence with itself. This is not contradictory: it is the very definition of the hyperreal. Hypotyposis and specularity. Cinema plagiarises and copies itself, remakes its classics, retroactivates its original myths, remakes silent films more perfect than the originals, etc. All this is logical. *Cinema is fascinated by itself as a lost object just as it (and we) are fascinated by the real as a referential in perdition.* Previously there was a living, dialectical, full and dramatic relationship between cinema and the imaginary (that is, novelistic, mythical unreality, even down to the delirious use of its own technique). Today, there is an inverse negative relation between the cinema and reality: it results from the loss of specificity which both have suffered. Cold collage, cool promiscuity, asexual engagement of two cold media which evolve in asymptotic line towards one another: cinema attempting to abolish itself in the absolute of reality, the real already long absorbed in cinematographic (or televised) hyperreality.

Translated by Paul Patton and Paul Foss

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Jean Baudrillard in English

The System of Objects (1968), trans. J. Benedict, London: Verso, 1996.
The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures (1970), trans. G. Ritzer, London: Sage, 1997.
For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign (1972), trans. C. Levin, St. Louis: Telos Press, 1981.
The Mirror of Production (1973), trans. M. Poster, St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975.
Symbolic Exchange and Death (1976), trans. I.H. Grant, London: Sage, 1993.
In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities (1978), trans. P. Foss, J. Johnston, and P. Patton, New York: Semiotext(e), 1983.
Seduction (1979), trans. B. Singer, London: Macmillan, 1990.
Simulacra and Simulation (1981), trans. S.F. Glaser, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984.
Simulations, New York: Semiotext(e), 1983.
Fatal Strategies: Crystal Revenge (1983), trans. P. Beitchman and W.G.J. Niesluchowski, London: Pluto, 1990.
America (1986), trans. C. Turner, London: Verso, 1988.
Cool Memories (1987), trans. C. Turner, London: Verso, 1990.
The Ecstasy of Communication (1987), ed. S. Lotringer, trans. B. and C. Schulze, New York: Semiotext(e), 1988.
Cool Memories II (1990), trans. C. Turner, Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.
The Transparency of Evil: Essays in Extreme Phenomena (1990), trans. J. Benedict, London: Verso, 1993.
The Gulf War Did Not Take Place (1991), trans. P. Patton, Sydney: Power Publications, and Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
The Illusion of the End (1992), trans. C. Turner, Cambridge: Polity, 1994.
The Art of Disappearance, Brisbane: Institute of Modern Art, 1994.
The Perfect Crime (1995), trans. C. Turner, London: Verso, 1996.
Fragments: Cool Memories III, 1990–1995 (1995), trans. E. Agar, London: Verso, 1997.
Screened Out (1997), trans. C. Turner, London: Verso, 2002.
Paroxysm: Interviews with Philippe Petit (1997), trans. C. Turner, London: Verso, 1998.
Impossible Exchange (1999), trans. C. Turner, London: Verso, 2001.
The Conspiracy of Art (1999), New York: Semiotext(e), 2005.
The Singular Objects of Architecture (with J. Nouvel; 1999), trans. R. Bononno, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.
Passwords (2000), trans. C. Turner, London: Verso, 2003.
Cool Memories IV (2000), trans. C. Turner, London: Verso, 2003.
Fragments: Conversations with François L'Yvonnet (2001), London: Routledge, 2003.
The Vital Illusion, ed. J. Witwer, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.
The Spirit of Terrorism, and Requiem for the Twin Towers (2002), trans. C. Turner, London: Verso, 2002.
The Spirit of Terrorism, and Other Essays (2002), 2nd edn, trans. C. Turner, London: Verso, 2003.
The Intelligence of Evil or the Lucidity Pact (Talking Images) (2004), trans. C. Turner, Oxford: Berg, 2005.
Cool Memories V (2005), trans. C. Turner, Cambridge: Polity, 2006.
Selected Writings, ed. M. Poster, trans. J. Mourrain, Cambridge: Polity, 1988.
Revenge of the Crystal: Selected Writings on the Modern Object and Its Destiny, eds and trans. P. Foss and J. Pefanis, London: Pluto, 1991.
Jean Baudrillard: Art and Artefact, ed. and trans. N. Zurbrugg, London: Sage, 1997.
The Jean Baudrillard Reader, ed. S. Redhead, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Further reading

Introductions to Baudrillard are given by Cooper (2008), Kellner (2006), and Merrin (2005). Critical readings have been collected by Bishop (2009), Kellner (1994), and Rokek and Turner (1993). Studies of the philosophical context of Baudrillard's theory are provided by Gane (1991a, 2000, 2008), Hegarty (2004), Kellner (1989), Levin (1996), Pawlett (2007), Pefanis (1991), and Sokal and Bricmont (1998). Selected interviews are collected in Gane (1993). His engagement with semiology, deconstruction, and discourse theory is considered by Genosko (1994), Hays (1979), and Poster (1979), while specific accounts of his work on simulation, the simulacrum, and the question of the real are offered by Abbinnett (2008), Butler (1999), Huyssen (1989), and Merrin (2001).

For studies of his ethical philosophy, see Boldt-Irons (2001), Butterfield (1999), and J. Smith (1998). The importance of his ideas for art and the media is explored by Butterfield (1999), Constable (2009), Gane (1991b),

Genosko (1999), Hegarty (2008), Kershaw (1999), Petrovic (2005), Poster (1981), and Stearns and Chaloupka (1991), with Diani (2001) and R.G. Smith (2002) focusing on his comments on America.

R. Abbinnett, 'The spectre and the simulacrum: history after Baudrillard', *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 2008, vol. 25, pp. 69–88.
R. Bishop (ed.), *Baudrillard Now: Current Perspectives in Baudrillard Studies*, Cambridge: Polity, 2009.
L.A. Boldt-Irons, 'Bataille and Baudrillard: from a general economy to the transparency of evil', *Angelaki*, 2001, vol. 6, pp. 79–90.
R. Butler, *Jean Baudrillard: The Defence of the Real*, London: Sage, 1999.
B. Butterfield, 'Ethical value and negative aesthetics: reconsidering the Baudrillard–Ballard connection', *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 1999, vol. 114, pp. 64–77.
C. Constable, *Adapting Philosophy: Jean Baudrillard and the Matrix Trilogy*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009.
N. Cooper, *On Jean Baudrillard*, London: Sage, 2008.
M. Diani, 'Democracy and its discontent: Tocqueville and Baudrillard on the nature of America', *Critical Studies*, 2001, vol. 15, pp. 53–68.
M. Gane, *Baudrillard: Critical and Fatal Theory*, London: Routledge, 1991a.
———, *Baudrillard's Bestiary: Baudrillard and Culture*, London: Routledge, 1991b.
——— (ed.), *Baudrillard Live: Selected Interviews*, London: Routledge, 1993.
———, *Jean Baudrillard: In Radical Uncertainty*, London: Pluto, 2000.
———, 'Cool memories: Baudrillard and the crisis of reading', *French Cultural Studies*, 2008, vol. 19, pp. 305–16.
G. Genosko, *Baudrillard and Signs*, London: Routledge, 1994.
———, *McLuhan and Baudrillard: Masters of Implosion*, London: Routledge, 1999.
M. Hays, 'A response to Mark Poster on Jean Baudrillard', *Boundary 2*, 1979, vol. 8, pp. 289–94.
P. Hegarty, *Jean Baudrillard: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2004.
———, 'Constructing (in) the "real" world: simulation and architecture in Baudrillard', *French Cultural Studies*, 2008, vol. 19, pp. 317–32.
A. Huyssen, 'In the shadow of McLuhan: Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulation', *Assemblage*, 1989, vol. 10, pp. 6–17.
D. Kellner, *Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond*, Cambridge: Polity, 1989.
——— (ed.), *Jean Baudrillard: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.
———, 'Jean Baudrillard', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2006. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/baudrillard/ (accessed 25 May 2010).
B. Kershaw, *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard*, London: Routledge, 1999.
C. Levin, *Jean Baudrillard: A Study in Cultural Metaphysics*, London: Prentice Hall, 1996.
W. Merrin, 'To play with phantoms: Jean Baudrillard and the evil demon of the simulacrum', *Economy and Society*, 2001, vol. 19, pp. 137–60.
———, *Baudrillard and the Media: A Critical Introduction*, Cambridge: Polity, 2005.
W. Pawlett, *Jean Baudrillard: Against Banality*, London: Routledge, 2007.
J. Pefanis, *Heterology and the Postmodern: Bataille, Baudrillard, and Lyotard*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.
P. Petrovic, 'Between visibility and invisibility: Baudrillard, Jean-Luc Marion, and Lance Olsen's *Girl Imagined by Chance*', *Extrapolation*, 2005, vol. 46, pp. 249–58.
M. Poster, 'Semiology and critical theory: from Marx to Baudrillard', *boundary 2*, 1979, vol. 8, pp. 275–88.
———, 'Technology and culture in Habermas and Baudrillard', *Contemporary Literature*, 1981, vol. 22, pp. 456–76.
C. Rokek and B. Turner (eds), *Forget Baudrillard*, London: Routledge, 1993.
J. Smith, 'Baudrillard and ethics: is mystery his message?', *Social Semiotics*, 1998, vol. 8, pp. 93–120.
R.G. Smith, 'The catastrophe of paradox: questions and answers on hyperreal America with Jean Baudrillard', *Space and Culture*, 2002, vol. 5, pp. 96–102.
A. Sokal and J. Bricmont, *Intellectual Impostures*, London: Profile Books, 1998, pp. 147–53; *Fashionable Nonsense: Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science*, New York: Picador, 1999, pp. 147–53. (Same book but different UK and US titles.)
W. Stearns and W. Chaloupka (eds), *Jean Baudrillard: The Disappearance of Art and Politics*, London: Macmillan, 1991.

Chapter 27

JUDITH BUTLER

INTRODUCTION

Central concerns of the American philosopher Judith Butler (b. 1956) are resistance to power and the place in society of gay rights and queer politics. An inaugurator of queer theory and a critic of Julia Kristeva's theory of the semiotic, Butler came to prominence following the publication in 1990 of her *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. As Butler writes in the 'Preface' to the tenth anniversary edition of *Gender Trouble*, the book seeks 'to uncover the ways in which the very thinking of what is possible in gendered life is foreclosed by certain habitual and violent presuppositions'.[1] In the book, through her critiques of de Beauvoir, Kristeva, Lacan, and Wittig, she challenges the foundations of feminist theory, arguing that it presupposes an essentialism rooted in categories of heterosexuality, with the consequence that gender is restricted to received notions of masculinity and femininity. In tackling certain aspects of French theory, Butler nevertheless draws upon French poststructuralism to make her claims, thus confirming her analysis as a form of 'immanent critique' or, as she puts it, a 'critical examination of the basic vocabulary of the movement of thought to which it belongs'.[2] There is a parallel with Žižek here in as much as poststructuralism, which has come to be regarded as politically ineffectual on the grounds of its leanings towards relativism, acquires the capacity for political progressiveness through its application to cultural studies and, in this instance, to gender studies by Butler. Theory, she writes, is now 'necessarily impure' on account of its being appropriated by cultural studies and being made to emerge 'in and as the very event of cultural translation'.[3]

In Butler's criticism of Kristeva we can see the principal ideas which shape the course of the former's philosophy. The problem Butler has with Kristeva is that her theory of the semiotic is wholly accepting of Lacan's assigning libidinal drives, such as the dependency of the child on the maternal body, an ontological status prior to language and culture. In constructing her theory of the semiotic, Kristeva draws on Lacan's distinction between the pre-Oedipal 'imaginary' and the post-Oedipal 'symbolic' stages in the development of a child's awareness. The 'symbolic order', for Lacan, is the three-term order of language, organized according to the structure of the Oedipus complex. In contrast, the imaginary is the period of transition from the child's not being able to distinguish where he ends and his mother begins to the realization that he is an object in the world among others. Because it is prior to the symbolic, the imaginary represents a domain of potential meaning that is prior to any knowledge of linguistic division and gender specificity. Kristeva adopts the term 'semiotic' to refer to the prelinguistic, generative aspect of the imaginary and its capacity to break through and disrupt symbolic meaning. It is the manner in which the imaginary breaks through and disrupts the symbolic which interests Kristeva. As Butler argues,

> for Kristeva, the semiotic expresses that original libidinal multiplicity within the very terms of culture, more precisely, within poetic language in which multiple meanings and semantic non-closure prevail. In effect, poetic language is the recovery of the maternal body within the terms of language, one that has the potential to disrupt, subvert, and displace the paternal law.[4]

However, Butler's objection to Kristeva's semiotic is that it is a form of essentialism, the view that the being of an entity is contained within or reducible to certain specific properties. This is as a result of its connection to the drives (taken to be biological) at work in the Oedipus complex.[5] Essentialism is active in her theory in that any Kristevian exploration of how the semiotic might subvert dominant linguistic order will always be determined by its reaction against an order that has been accepted as given, accepted as a biology that must be worked against. Closer inspection finds that this problem even puts into question the coherence of the semiotic as an ontology which can be the condition of possibility for other modes of feminist being since, as Butler asserts, the semiotic can only ever be accessed through the symbolic. We are told the semiotic is ontologically prior to the symbolic, yet our only contact with it is through the broken or subverted pieces of the symbolic which it leaves behind.

Rather than attribute the potential of a feminist rethinking of ontology to the maternal body posited as prelinguistic, Butler turns to the materiality of the body and its relationship with gender performativity. She works with the mechanisms of discourse (in the Foucauldian sense) to establish 'the normative conditions under which the materiality of the body is framed and formed, and, in particular, how it is formed through differential categories of sex'.[6] The idea that 'sex' is a biological given is undercut here on the grounds that it is first and foremost an object of discourse, including scientific discourse. Discourse in the Foucauldian sense refers to language use determined by power and propriety. For example, according to Foucault, there was 'a political, economic, and technical incitement to talk about sex' at the beginning of the eighteenth century on the part of the agencies of power, e.g. administrations associated with labour capacity, medicine, and population, so that what was formerly awkward or a taboo could become ordered and rationalized in the interests of those agencies.[7] Thus, discursively, 'sex' is not 'a static description of what one is' but 'one of the norms by which the "one" becomes visible at all', that is to say, it is one of the norms by which the body becomes materialized, contoured, and defined within culture and society.[8]

Gender is performative for Butler precisely because it works with and within the discourses which construct 'sex'. Defining 'performativity' in Butler's sense is not an easy thing to do, as she admits, since her own understanding of the term has undergone subtle changes, and because many other authors working in response to her have introduced their own interpretations of the term.[9] However, it is possible to identify certain key features. The idea of 'the performative' comes from J.L. Austin's speech act theory, and refers to utterances which act or bring into being the very thing they name, e.g. saying 'I promise' is both an utterance and an action produced by the utterance. However, performativity is not a singular or deliberate 'act' for Butler but a 'reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names'.[10] It is 'reiterative and citational' (the two terms are linked) in as much as the actions we take will always draw on and employ norms: patterns of conduct that are repeatable, iterable, because they are citational, because they are recognized as belonging to an accepted discursive practice. In this way, the tie between reiterability and citation 'produces that which it posits as outside itself'.[11] Butler recalls Derrida's reading of Kafka's 'Before the Law' in which a person waiting before the door of the law 'attributes a certain force to the law' and 'conjures its object' *by waiting*. The fact

that it is we who do the waiting (in this instance) and perform iterations generally *with our bodies* means that Butler's approach can evade challenges along constructionist – 'Is gender a social or fictional construct?' – or subjectivist – 'Who is doing the constructing?' – lines. Because we are bodily located in the world, what we think of as 'our' actions and gestures are always already saturated with the laws and norms which Butler aims to identify as materializations realized through performativity. Customarily (taking modern mind–body dualism as custom), we take physical matter, including the physicality of the body, to be a given, pre-determined domain, and speech and thought to be of an altogether different, non-material order, and products of an independent, unbound-by-matter, 'volitional' or 'voluntarist subject'.[12] Against this, she articulates performativity as '*a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter*'.[13]

The politically progressive dimension of Butler's work comes from its opening up of possibilities not yet entertained by governing discourses. How is the opening up of possibilities politically or ontologically helpful? As Butler wryly observes, this is not a question which tends to get asked by people who have lived 'in the social world as what is "impossible", illegible, unrealizable, unreal, and illegitimate'.[14] The opening up of possibilities happens when the performative, an act of discourse with the power to bring into being the very thing it names, 'creates more than it ever meant to, signifying in excess of any intended referent'. In 'Gender Is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion', from *Bodies That Matter* (1993) and included in this volume, Butler conducts a close reading of the film *Paris Is Burning* to demonstrate how repetitions within the film – 'repetitions of hegemonic forms of power' – 'fail to repeat loyally and, in that failure, open up possibilities for resignifying the terms of violation against their violating aims'. Discursive practices, which otherwise simultaneously produce and subjugate subjects in a culture organized 'for the annihilation of queers', she writes, nevertheless create 'occasional spaces in which those annihilating norms, those killing ideals of gender and race, are mimed, reworked, resignified'. Her interest is in how these spaces appear in the film. The pairing of 'production' and 'subjugation' draws on Althusser's concept of 'interpellation', an act of law which reprimands and instils fear in the subject, while at the same time transforming the individual into a subject, someone who is now acknowledged and a centre of attention. Just how possibility can emerge from the tension between production and subjugation is far from straightforward though. The film documents the drag balls in Harlem, New York City, but drag is ambivalent because it both 'appropriates and subverts racist, misogynist, and homophobic norms of oppression'. Can an appropriation be a subversion at the same time? If not, and they are locked in an 'irresolvable tension', how might we evaluate this? The chapter plots the complexities involved in getting answers to these questions from Jennie Livingston's film. Taking issue with bell hooks's criticism that Livingston, through her camerawork, 'assumes an imperial overseeing position that is in no way progressive or counterhegemonic', Butler highlights the constructedness of Livinston's 'reality' and argues for a more ambivalent reading, where the ambivalence allows for the opening up of a distance between appropriation and subversion.

Notes

1 J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd edn, New York: Routledge, 1999, p. viii.
2 Ibid., p. vii.
3 Ibid., p. ix.
4 Ibid., pp. 101–02.

5 Butler makes this assertion in *Gender Trouble*, pp. 120–22. She focuses on and quotes the following passage from Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. T.S. Gora *et al.*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1984, p. 113:

> Material compulsion, spasm of a memory belonging to the species that either binds together or splits apart to perpetuate itself, series of markers with no other significance than the eternal return of the life-death biological cycle. How can we verbalize this prelinguistic, unrepresentable memory? Heraclitus' flux, Epicurus' atoms, the whirling dust of cabalic, Arab and Indian mystics, and the stippled drawings of psychedelics – all seem better metaphors than the theory of Being, the logos, and its laws.

6 J. Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 17.
7 M. Foucault, 'The incitement to discourse', in A. Jaworski and N. Coupland (eds), *The Discourse Reader*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, p. 493. Reproduced from *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1, An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley, London: Allen Lane, 1979.
8 Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 2.
9 Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. xiv.
10 Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 2.
11 Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. xv.
12 Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 7.
13 Ibid., p. 9, original emphasis.
14 Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. viii.

■ ■ ■

GENDER IS BURNING: QUESTIONS OF APPROPRIATION AND SUBVERSION

JUDITH BUTLER

> We all have friends who, when they knock on the door and we ask, through the door, the question, 'Who's there?,' answer (since 'it's obvious') 'It's me.' And we recognize that '*it is him*,' *or* '*her*' [my emphasis].
>
> Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses'

> The purpose of 'law' is absolutely the last thing to employ in the history of the origin of law: on the contrary, … the cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes, lie worlds apart; whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected.
>
> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*

In Althusser's notion of interpellation, it is the police who initiate the call or address by which a subject becomes socially constituted. There is the policeman, the one who not only represents the law but whose address 'Hey you!' has the effect of binding the law to the one who is hailed. This 'one' who appears not to be in a condition of trespass prior to the call (for whom the call establishes a given practice as a trespass) is not fully a social subject, is not fully subjectivated, for he or she is not yet reprimanded. The reprimand does not merely repress or control the subject, but forms a crucial part of the juridical and social *formation* of the subject. The call is formative, if not *per*formative, precisely because it initiates the individual into the subjected status of the subject.

Althusser conjectures this 'hailing' or 'interpellation' as a unilateral act, as the power and force of the law to compel fear at the same time that it offers recognition at an expense. In the reprimand the subject not only receives recognition, but attains as well a certain order of social existence, in being transferred from an outer region of indifferent, questionable, or impossible being to the discursive or social domain of the subject. But does this subjectivation take place as a direct effect of the reprimanding utterance or must the utterance wield the power to compel the fear of punishment and, from that compulsion, to produce a compliance and obedience to the law? Are there are other ways of being addressed and constituted by the law, ways of being occupied and occupying the law, that disarticulate the power of punishment from the power of recognition?

Althusser underscores the Lacanian contribution to a structural analysis of this kind, and argues that a relation of misrecognition persists between the law and the subject it compels.[1] Although he refers to the possibility of 'bad subjects,' he does not consider the range of *disobedience* that such an interpellating law might produce. The law might not only be refused, but it might also be ruptured, forced into a rearticulation that calls into question the monotheistic force of its own unilateral operation. Where the uniformity of the subject is expected, where the behavioral conformity of the subject is commanded, there might be produced the refusal of the law in the form of the parodic inhabiting of conformity that subtly calls into question the legitimacy of the command, a repetition of the law into hyperbole, a rearticulation of the law against the authority of the one who delivers it. Here the performative, the call by the law which seeks to produce a lawful subject, produces a set of consequences that exceed and confound what appears to be the disciplining intention motivating the law. Interpellation thus loses its status as a simple performative, an act of discourse with the power to create that to which it refers, and creates more than it ever meant to, signifying in excess of any intended referent.

It is this constitutive failure of the performative, this slippage between discursive command and its appropriated effect, which provides the linguistic occasion and index for a consequential disobedience.

Consider that the use of language is itself enabled by first having been *called a name*, the occupation of the name is that by which one is, quite without choice, situated within discourse. This 'I,' which is produced through the accumulation and convergence of such 'calls,' cannot extract itself from the historicity of that chain or raise itself up and confront that chain as if it were an object opposed to me, which is not me, but only what others have made of me; for that estrangement or division produced by the mesh of interpellating calls and the 'I' who is its site is not only violating, but enabling as well, what Gayatri Spivak refers to as 'an enabling violation.' The 'I' who would oppose its construction is always in some sense drawing from that construction to articulate its opposition; further, the 'I' draws what is called its 'agency' in part through being implicated in the very relations of power that it seeks to oppose. To be *implicated* in the relations of power, indeed, enabled by the relations of power that the 'I' opposes is not, as a consequence, to be reducible to their existing forms.

You will note that in the making of this formulation, I bracket this 'I' in quotation marks, but I am still here. And I should add that this is an 'I' that I produce here for you in response to a certain suspicion that this theoretical project has lost the person, the author, the life; over and against this claim, or rather, in response to having been called the site of such an evacuation, I write that this kind of bracketing of the 'I' may well be crucial to the thinking through of the constitutive ambivalence of being socially constituted, where 'constitution' carries both the enabling and violating sense of 'subjection.' If one comes into discursive life through being called or hailed in injurious terms, how might one occupy the interpellation by which one is already occupied to direct the possibilities of resignification against the aims of violation?

This is not the same as censoring or prohibiting the use of the 'I' or of the autobiographical as such; on the contrary, it is the inquiry into the ambivalent relations of power that make that use

possible. What does it mean to have such uses repeated in one's very being, 'messages implied in one's being,' as Patricia Williams claims, only to repeat those uses such that subversion might be derived from the very conditions of violation. In this sense, the argument that the category of 'sex' is the instrument or effect of 'sexism' or its interpellating moment, that 'race' is the instrument and effect of 'racism' or its interpellating moment, that 'gender' only exists in the service of heterosexism, does *not* entail that we ought never to make use of such terms, as if such terms could only and always reconsolidate the oppressive regimes of power by which they are spawned. On the contrary, precisely because such terms have been produced and constrained within such regimes, they ought to be repeated in directions that reverse and displace their originating aims. One does not stand at an instrumental distance from the terms by which one experiences violation. Occupied by such terms and yet occupying them oneself risks a complicity, a repetition, a relapse into injury, but it is also the occasion to work the mobilizing power of injury, of an interpellation one never chose. Where one might understand violation as a trauma which can only induce a destructive repetition compulsion (and surely this is a powerful consequence of violation), it seems equally possible to acknowledge the force of repetition as the very condition of an affirmative response to violation. The compulsion to repeat an injury is not necessarily the compulsion to repeat the injury in the same way or to stay fully within the traumatic orbit of that injury. The force of repetition in language may be the paradoxical condition by which a certain agency – not linked to a fiction of the ego as master of circumstance – is derived from the *impossibility* of choice.

It is in this sense that Irigaray's critical mime of Plato, the fiction of the lesbian phallus, and the rearticulation of kinship in *Paris Is Burning* might be understood as repetitions of hegemonic forms of power which fail to repeat loyally and, in that failure, open possibilities for resignifying the terms of violation against their violating aims. Cather's occupation of the paternal name, Larsen's inquiry into the painful and fatal mime that is passing for white, and the reworking of 'queer' from abjection to politicized affiliation will interrogate similar sites of ambivalence produced at the limits of discursive legitimacy.

The temporal structure of such a subject is chiasmic in this sense: in the place of a substantial or self-determining 'subject,' this juncture of discursive demands is something like a 'crossroads,' to use Gloria Anzaldúa's phrase, a crossroads of cultural and political discursive forces, which she herself claims cannot be understood through the notion of the 'subject.'[2] There is no subject prior to its constructions, and neither is the subject determined by those constructions; it is always the nexus, the non-space of cultural collision, in which the demand to resignify or repeat the very terms which constitute the 'we' cannot be summarily refused, but neither can they be followed in strict obedience. It is the space of this ambivalence which opens up the possibility of a reworking of the very terms by which subjectivation proceeds – and fails to proceed.

Ambivalent drag

From this formulation, then, I would like to move to a consideration of the film *Paris Is Burning*, to what it suggests about the simultaneous production and subjugation of subjects in a culture which appears to arrange always and in every way for the annihilation of queers, but which nevertheless produces occasional spaces in which those annihilating norms, those killing ideals of gender and race, are mimed, reworked, resignified. As much as there is defiance and affirmation, the creation of kinship and of glory in that film, there is also the kind of reiteration of norms which cannot be called subversive, but which lead to the death of Venus Xtravaganza, a Latina/preoperative transsexual, cross-dresser, prostitute, and member of the 'House of Xtravaganza.' To what set of interpellating calls does Venus respond, and how is the reiteration of the law to be read in the manner of her response?

Venus, and *Paris Is Burning* more generally, calls into question whether parodying the dominant norms is enough to displace them; indeed, whether the denaturalization of gender cannot be the very vehicle for a reconsolidation of hegemonic norms. Although many readers understood *Gender Trouble* to be arguing for the proliferation of drag performances as a way of subverting dominant gender norms, I want to underscore that there is no necessary relation between drag and subversion, and that drag may well be used in the service of both the denaturalization and reidealization of hyperbolic heterosexual gender norms. At best, it seems, drag is a site of a certain ambivalence, one which reflects the more general situation of being implicated in the regimes of power by which one is constituted and, hence, of being implicated in the very regimes of power that one opposes.

To claim that all gender is like drag, or is drag, is to suggest that 'imitation' is at the heart of the *heterosexual* project and its gender binarisms, that drag is not a secondary imitation that presupposes a prior and original gender, but that hegemonic heterosexuality is itself a constant and repeated effort to imitate its own idealizations. That it must repeat this imitation, that it sets up pathologizing practices and normalizing sciences in order to produce and consecrate its own claim on originality and propriety, suggests that heterosexual performativity is beset by an anxiety that it can never fully overcome, that its effort to become its own idealizations can never be finally or fully achieved, and that it is consistently haunted by that domain of sexual possibility that must be excluded for heterosexualized gender to produce itself. In this sense, then, drag is subversive to the extent that it reflects on the imitative structure by which hegemonic gender is itself produced and disputes heterosexuality's claim on naturalness and originality.

But here it seems that I am obliged to add an important qualification: heterosexual privilege operates in many ways, and two ways in which it operates include naturalizing itself and rendering itself as the original and the norm. But these are not the only ways in which it works, for it is clear that there are domains in which heterosexuality can concede its lack of originality and naturalness but still hold on to its power. Thus, there are forms of drag that heterosexual culture produces for itself – we might think of Julie Andrews in *Victor, Victoria* or Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie* or Jack Lemmon in *Some Like It Hot* where the anxiety over a possible homosexual consequence is both produced and deflected within the narrative trajectory of the films. These are films which produce and contain the homosexual excess of any given drag performance, the fear that an apparently heterosexual contact might be made before the discovery of a nonapparent homosexuality. This is drag as high het entertainment, and though these films are surely important to read as cultural texts in which homophobia and homosexual panic are negotiated,[3] I would be reticent to call them subversive. Indeed, one might argue that such films are functional in providing a ritualistic release for a heterosexual economy that must constantly police its own boundaries against the invasion of queerness, and that this displaced production and resolution of homosexual panic actually fortifies the heterosexual regime in its self-perpetuating task.

In her provocative review of *Paris Is Burning*, bell hooks criticized some productions of gay male drag as misogynist, and here she allied herself in part with feminist theorists such as Marilyn Frye and Janice Raymond.[4] This tradition within feminist thought has argued that drag is offensive to women and that it is an imitation based in ridicule and degradation. Raymond, in particular, places drag on a continuum with cross-dressing and transsexualism, ignoring the important differences between them, maintaining that in each practice women are the object of hatred and appropriation, and that there is nothing in the identification that is respectful or elevating. As a rejoinder, one might consider that identification is always an ambivalent process. Identifying with a gender under contemporary regimes of power involves identifying with a set of norms that are and are not realizable, and whose power and status precede the identifications by which they are insistently approximated. This 'being a man' and this 'being a woman' are

internally unstable affairs. They are always beset by ambivalence precisely because there is a cost in every identification, the loss of some other set of identifications, the forcible approximation of a norm one never chooses, a norm that chooses us, but which we occupy, reverse, resignify to the extent that the norm fails to determine us completely.

The problem with the analysis of drag as only misogyny is, of course, that it figures male-to-female transsexuality, cross-dressing, and drag as male homosexual activities – which they are not always – and it further diagnoses male homosexuality as rooted in misogyny. The feminist analysis thus makes male homosexuality *about* women, and one might argue that at its extreme, this kind of analysis is in fact a colonization in reverse, a way for feminist women to make themselves into the center of male homosexual activity (and thus to reinscribe the heterosexual matrix, paradoxically, at the heart of the radical feminist position). Such an accusation follows the same kind of logic as those homophobic remarks that often follow upon the discovery that one is a lesbian: a lesbian is one who must have had a bad experience with men, or who has not yet found the right one. These diagnoses presume that lesbianism is acquired by virtue of some failure in the heterosexual machinery, thereby continuing to install heterosexuality as the 'cause' of lesbian desire; lesbian desire is figured as the fatal effect of a derailed heterosexual causality. In this framework, heterosexual desire is always true, and lesbian desire is always and only a mask and forever false. In the radical feminist argument against drag, the displacement of women is figured as the aim and effect of male-to-female drag; in the homophobic dismissal of lesbian desire, the disappointment with and displacement of men is understood as the cause and final truth of lesbian desire. According to these views, drag is nothing but the displacement and appropriation of 'women,' and hence fundamentally based in a misogyny, a hatred of women; and lesbianism is nothing but the displacement and appropriation of men, and so fundamentally a matter of hating men – misandry.

These explanations of displacement can only proceed by accomplishing yet another set of displacements: of desire, of phantasmatic pleasures, and of forms of love that are not reducible to a heterosexual matrix and the logic of repudiation. Indeed, the only place love is to be found is *for* the ostensibly repudiated object, where love is understood to be strictly produced through a logic of repudiation; hence, drag is nothing but the effect of a love embittered by disappointment or rejection, the incorporation of the Other whom one originally desired, but now hates. And lesbianism is nothing other than the effect of a love embittered by disappointment or rejection, and of a recoil from that love, a defense against it or, in the case of butchness, the appropriation of the masculine position that one originally loved.

This logic of repudiation installs heterosexual love as the origin and truth of both drag and lesbianism, and it interprets both practices as symptoms of thwarted love. But what is displaced in this explanation of displacement is the notion that there might be pleasure, desire, and love that is not solely determined by what it repudiates.[5] Now it may seem at first that the way to oppose these reductions and degradations of queer practices is to assert their radical specificity, to claim that there is a lesbian desire radically different from a heterosexual one, with *no* relation to it, that is neither the repudiation nor the appropriation of heterosexuality, and that has radically other origins than those which sustain heterosexuality. Or one might be tempted to argue that drag is not related to the ridicule or degradation or appropriation of women: when it is men in drag as women, what we have is the destabilization of gender itself, a destabilization that is denaturalizing and that calls into question the claims of normativity and originality by which gender and sexual oppression sometimes operate. But what if the situation is neither exclusively one nor the other; certainly, some lesbians have wanted to retain the notion that their sexual practice is rooted in part in a repudiation of heterosexuality, but also to claim that this repudiation does not account for lesbian desire, and cannot therefore be identified as the hidden or original 'truth' of lesbian desire. And the

case of drag is difficult in yet another way, for it seems clear to me that there is both a sense of defeat and a sense of insurrection to be had from the drag pageantry in *Paris Is Burning*, that the drag we see, the drag which is after all framed for us, filmed for us, is one which both appropriates and subverts racist, misogynist, and homophobic norms of oppression. How are we to account for this ambivalence? This is not first an appropriation and then a subversion. Sometimes it is both at once; sometimes it remains caught in an irresolvable tension, and sometimes a fatally unsubversive appropriation takes place.

Paris Is Burning (1991) is a film produced and directed by Jennie Livingston about drag balls in New York City, in Harlem, attended by, performed by 'men' who are either African-American or Latino. The balls are contests in which the contestants compete under a variety of categories. The categories include a variety of social norms, many of which are established in white culture as signs of class, like that of the 'executive' and the Ivy League student; some of which are marked as feminine, ranging from high drag to butch queen; and some of them, like that of the 'bangie,' are taken from straight black masculine street culture. Not all of the categories, then, are taken from white culture; some of them are replications of a straightness which is not white, and some of them are focused on class, especially those which almost require that expensive women's clothing be 'mopped' or stolen for the occasion. The competition in military garb shifts to yet another register of legitimacy, which enacts the performative and gestural conformity to a masculinity which parallels the performative or reiterative production of femininity in other categories. 'Realness' is not exactly a category in which one competes; it is a standard that is used to judge any given performance within the established categories. And yet what determines the effect of realness is the ability to compel belief, to produce the naturalized effect. This effect is itself the result of an embodiment of norms, a reiteration of norms, an impersonation of a racial and class norm, a norm which is at once a figure, a figure of a body, which is no particular body, but a morphological ideal that remains the standard which regulates the performance, but which no performance fully approximates.

Significantly, this is a performance that works, that effects realness, to the extent that it *cannot* be read. For 'reading' means taking someone down, exposing what fails to work at the level of appearance, insulting or deriding someone. For a performance to work, then, means that a reading is no longer possible, or that a reading, an interpretation, appears to be a kind of transparent seeing, where what appears and what it means coincide. On the contrary, when what appears and how it is 'read' diverge, the artifice of the performance can be read as artifice; the ideal splits off from its appropriation. But the impossibility of reading means that the artifice works, the approximation of realness appears to be achieved, the body performing and the ideal performed appear indistinguishable.

But what is the status of this ideal? Of what is it composed? What reading does the film encourage, and what does the film conceal? Does the denaturalization of the norm succeed in subverting the norm, or is this a denaturalization in the service of a perpetual reidealization, one that can only oppress, even as, or precisely when, it is embodied most effectively? Consider the different fates of Venus Xtravaganza. She 'passes' as a light-skinned woman, but is – by virtue of a certain failure to pass completely – clearly vulnerable to homophobic violence; ultimately, her life is taken presumably by a client who, upon the discovery of what she calls her 'little secret,' mutilates her for having seduced him. On the other hand, Willi Ninja can pass as straight; his voguing becomes foregrounded in het video productions with Madonna et al., and he achieves post-legendary status on an international scale. There is passing and then there is passing, and it is – as we used to say – 'no accident' that Willi Ninja ascends and Venus Xtravaganza dies.

Now Venus, Venus Xtravaganza, she seeks a certain transubstantiation of gender in order to find an imaginary man who will designate a class and race privilege that promises a permanent

shelter from racism, homophobia, and poverty. And it would not be enough to claim that for Venus gender is *marked by* race and class, for gender is not the substance or primary substrate and race and class the qualifying attributes. In this instance, gender is the vehicle for the phantasmatic transformation of that nexus of race and class, the site of its articulation. Indeed, in *Paris Is Burning*, becoming real, becoming a real woman, although not everyone's desire (some children want merely to 'do' realness, and that, only within the confines of the ball), constitutes the site of the phantasmatic promise of a rescue from poverty, homophobia, and racist delegitimation.

The contest (which we might read as a 'contesting of realness') involves the phantasmatic attempt to approximate realness, but it also exposes the norms that regulate realness as *themselves* phantasmatically instituted and sustained. The rules that regulate and legitimate realness (shall we call them symbolic?) constitute the mechanism by which certain sanctioned fantasies, sanctioned imaginaries, are insidiously elevated as the parameters of realness. We could, within conventional Lacanian parlance, call this the ruling of the symbolic, except that the symbolic assumes the primacy of sexual difference in the constitution of the subject. What *Paris Is Burning* suggests, however, is that the order of sexual difference is not prior to that of race or class in the constitution of the subject; indeed, that the symbolic is also and at once a racializing set of norms, and that norms of realness by which the subject is produced are racially informed conceptions of 'sex' (this underscores the importance of subjecting the entire psychoanalytic paradigm to this insight).[6]

This double movement of approximating and exposing the phantasmatic status of the realness norm, the symbolic norm, is reinforced by the diagetic movement of the film in which clips of so-called 'real' people moving in and out of expensive stores are juxtaposed against the ballroom drag scenes.

In the drag ball productions of realness, we witness and produce the phantasmatic constitution of a subject, a subject who repeats and mimes the legitimating norms by which it itself has been degraded, a subject founded in the project of mastery that compels and disrupts its own repetitions. This is not a subject who stands back from its identifications and decides instrumentally how or whether to work each of them today; on the contrary, the subject is the incoherent and mobilized imbrication of identifications; it is constituted in and through the iterability of its performance, a repetition which works at once to legitimate and delegitimate the realness norms by which it is produced.

In the pursuit of realness this subject is produced, a phantasmatic pursuit that mobilizes identifications, underscoring the phantasmatic promise that constitutes any identificatory move – a promise which, taken too seriously, can culminate only in disappointment and disidentification. A fantasy that for Venus, because she dies – killed apparently by one of her clients, perhaps after the discovery of those remaining organs – cannot be translated into the symbolic. This is a killing that is performed by a symbolic that would eradicate those phenomena that require an opening up of the possibilities for the resignification of sex. If Venus wants to become a woman, and cannot overcome being a Latina, then Venus is treated by the symbolic in precisely the ways in which women of color are treated. Her death thus testifies to a tragic misreading of the social map of power, a misreading orchestrated by that very map according to which the sites for a phantasmatic self-overcoming are constantly resolved into disappointment. If the signifiers of whiteness and femaleness – as well as some forms of hegemonic maleness constructed through class privilege – are sites of phantasmatic promise, then it is clear that women of color and lesbians are not only everywhere excluded from this scene, but constitute a site of identification that is consistently refused and abjected in the collective phantasmatic pursuit of a transubstantiation into various forms of drag, transsexualism, and uncritical miming of the hegemonic. That this fantasy involves becoming in part like women and, for some of the children, becoming like black women, falsely

constitutes black women as a site of privilege; they can catch a man and be protected by him, an impossible idealization which of course works to deny the situation of the great numbers of poor black women who are single mothers without the support of men. In this sense, the 'identification' is composed of a denial, an envy, which is the envy of a phantasm of black women, an idealization that produces a denial. On the other hand, insofar as black men who are queer can become feminized by hegemonic straight culture, there is in the performative dimension of the ball a significant *reworking* of that feminization, an occupation of the identification that is, as it were, *already* made between faggots and women, the feminization of the faggot, the feminization of the black faggot, which is the black feminization of the faggot.

The performance is thus a kind of talking back, one that remains largely constrained by the terms of the original assailment: If a white homophobic hegemony considers the black drag ball queen to be a woman, that woman, constituted already by that hegemony, will become the occasion for the rearticulation of its terms; embodying the excess of that production, the queen will out-woman women, and in the process confuse and seduce an audience whose gaze must to some degree be structured through those hegemonies, an audience who, through the hyperbolic staging of the scene, will be drawn into the abjection it wants both to resist and to overcome. The phantasmatic excess of this production constitutes the site of women not only as marketable goods within an erotic economy of exchange,[7] but as goods which, as it were, are also privileged consumers with access to wealth and social privilege and protection. This is a full-scale phantasmatic transfiguration not only of the plight of poor black and Latino gay men, but of poor black women and Latinas, who are the figures for the abjection that the drag ball scene elevates as a site of idealized identification. It would, I think, be too simple to reduce this identificatory move to black male misogyny, as if that were a discrete typology, for the feminization of the poor black man and, most trenchantly, of the poor, black, gay man, is a strategy of abjection that is already underway, originating in the complex of racist, homophobic, misogynist, and classist constructions that belong to larger hegemonies of oppression.

These hegemonies operate, as Gramsci insisted, through *rearticulation*, but here is where the accumulated force of a historically entrenched and entrenching rearticulation overwhelms the more fragile effort to build an alternative cultural configuration from or against that more powerful regime. Importantly, however, that prior hegemony also works through and as its 'resistance' so that the relation between the marginalized community and the dominative is not, strictly speaking, oppositional. The citing of the dominant norm does not, in this instance, displace that norm; rather, it becomes the means by which that dominant norm is most painfully reiterated as the very desire and the performance of those it subjects.

Clearly, the denaturalization of sex, in its multiple senses, does not imply a liberation from hegemonic constraint: when Venus speaks her desire to become a whole woman, to find a man and have a house in the suburbs with a washing machine, we may well question whether the denaturalization of gender and sexuality that she performs, and performs well, culminates in a reworking of the normative framework of heterosexuality. The painfulness of her death at the end of the film suggests as well that there are cruel and fatal social constraints on denaturalization. As much as she crosses gender, sexuality, and race performatively, the hegemony that reinscribes the privileges of normative femininity and whiteness wields the final power to *re*naturalize Venus's body and cross out that prior crossing, an erasure that is her death. Of course, the film brings Venus back, as it were, into visibility, although not to life, and thus constitutes a kind of cinematic performativity. Paradoxically, the film brings fame and recognition not only to Venus but also to the other drag ball children who are depicted in the film as able only to attain local legendary status while longing for wider recognition.

The camera, of course, plays precisely to this desire, and so is implicitly installed in the film as the promise of legendary status. And yet, is there a filmic effort to take stock of the place of

the camera in the trajectory of desire that it not only records, but also incites? In her critical review of the film, bell hooks raises the question not only of the place of the camera, but also that of the filmmaker, Jennie Livingston, a white lesbian (in other contexts called 'a white Jewish lesbian from Yale,' an interpellation which also implicates this author in its sweep), in relation to the drag ball community that she entered and filmed. hooks remarks that,

> Jennie Livingston approaches her subject matter as an outsider looking in. Since her presence as white woman/lesbian filmmaker is 'absent' from *Paris Is Burning*, it is easy for viewers to imagine that they are watching an ethnographic film documenting the life of black gay 'natives' and not recognize that they are watching a work shaped and formed from a perspective and standpoint specific to Livingston. By cinematically masking this reality (we hear her ask questions but never see her) Livingston does not oppose the way hegemonic whiteness 'represents' blackness, but rather assumes an imperial overseeing position that is in no way progressive or counterhegemonic.

Later in the same essay, hooks raises the question of not merely whether or not the cultural location of the filmmaker is absent from the film, but whether this absence operates to form tacitly the focus and effect of the film, exploiting the colonialist trope of an 'innocent' ethnographic gaze: 'Too many critics and interviewers,' hooks argues, '… act as though she somehow did this marginalized black gay subculture a favor by bringing their experience to a wider public. Such a stance obscures the substantial rewards she has received for this work. Since so many of the black gay men in the film express the desire to be big stars, it is easy to place Livingston in the role of benefactor, offering these "poor black souls" a way to realize their dreams' (63).

Although hooks restricts her remarks to black men in the film, most of the members of the House of Xtravaganza are Latino, some of whom are light-skinned, some of whom engage in crossing and passing, some of who only do the ball, some who are engaged in life projects to effect a full transubstantiation into femininity and/or into whiteness. The 'houses' are organized in part along ethnic lines. This seems crucial to underscore precisely because neither Livingston nor hooks considers the place and force of ethnicity in the articulation of kinship relations.

To the extent that a transubstantiation into legendary status, into an idealized domain of gender and race, structures the phantasmatic trajectory of the drag ball culture, Livingston's camera enters this world as the promise of phantasmatic fulfillment: a wider audience, national and international fame. If Livingston is the white girl with the camera, she is both the object and vehicle of desire; and yet, as a lesbian, she apparently maintains some kind of identificatory bond with the gay men in the film and also, it seems, with the kinship system, replete with 'houses,' 'mothers,' and 'children,' that sustains the drag ball scene and is itself organized by it. The one instance where Livingston's body might be said to appear allegorically on camera is when Octavia St. Laurent is posing for the camera, as a moving model would for a photographer. We hear a voice tell her that she's terrific, and it is unclear whether it is a man shooting the film as a proxy for Livingston, or Livingston herself. What is suggested by this sudden intrusion of the camera into the film is something of the camera's desire, the desire that motivates the camera, in which a white lesbian phallically organized by the use of the camera (elevated to the status of disembodied gaze, holding out the promise of erotic recognition) eroticizes a black male-to-female transsexual – presumably preoperative – who 'works' perceptually as a woman.

What would it mean to say that Octavia is Jennie Livingston's kind of girl? Is the category or, indeed, 'the position' of white lesbian disrupted by such a claim? If this is the production of the black transsexual for an exoticizing white gaze, is it not also the transsexualization of lesbian desire? Livingston incites Octavia to become a woman for Livingston's own camera, and Livingston thereby

assumes the power of 'having the phallus,' i.e., the ability to confer that femininity, to anoint Octavia as model woman. But to the extent that Octavia receives and is produced by that recognition, the camera itself is empowered as phallic instrument. Moreover, the camera acts as surgical instrument and operation, the vehicle through which the transubstantiation occurs. Livingston thus becomes the one with the power to turn men into women who, then, depend on the power of her gaze to become and remain women. Having asked about the transsexualization of lesbian desire, then, it follows that we might ask more particularly: what is the status of the desire to feminize black and Latino men that the film enacts? Does this not serve the purpose, among others, of a visual pacification of subjects by whom white women are imagined to be socially endangered?

Does the camera promise a transubstantiation of sorts? Is it the token of that promise to deliver economic privilege and the transcendence of social abjection? What does it mean to eroticize the holding out of that promise, as hooks asks, when the film will do well, but the lives that they record will remain substantially unaltered? And if the camera is the vehicle for that transubstantiation, what is the power assumed by the one who wields the camera, drawing on that desire and exploiting it? Is this not its own fantasy, one in which the filmmaker wields the power to transform what she records? And is this fantasy of the camera's power not directly counter to the ethnographic conceit that structures the film?

hooks is right to argue that within this culture the ethnographic conceit of a neutral gaze will always be a white gaze, an unmarked white gaze, one which passes its own perspective off as the omniscient, one which presumes upon and enacts its own perspective as if it were no perspective at all. But what does it mean to think about this camera as an instrument and effect of lesbian desire? I would have liked to have seen the question of Livingston's cinematic desire reflexively thematized in the film itself, her intrusions into the frame as 'intrusions,' the camera *implicated* in the trajectory of desire that it seems compelled to incite. To the extent that the camera figures tacitly as the instrument of transubstantiation, it assumes the place of the phallus, as that which controls the field of signification. The camera thus trades on the masculine privilege of the disembodied gaze, the gaze that has the power to produce bodies, but which is itself no body.

But is this cinematic gaze only white and phallic, or is there in this film a decentered place for the camera as well? hooks points to two competing narrative trajectories in the film, one that focuses on the pageantry of the balls and another that focuses on the lives of the participants. She argues that the spectacle of the pageantry arrives to quell the portraits of suffering that these men relate about their lives outside the ball. And in her rendition, the pageantry represents a life of pleasurable fantasy, and the lives outside the drag ball are the painful 'reality' that the pageantry seeks phantasmatically to overcome. hooks claims that 'at no point in Livingston's film are the men asked to speak about their connections to a world of family and community beyond the drag ball. The cinematic narrative makes the ball the center of their lives. And yet who determines this? Is this the way the black men view their reality or is this the reality that Livingston constructs?'

Clearly, this *is* the way that Livingston constructs their 'reality,' and the insights into their lives that we do get are still tied in to the ball. We hear about the ways in which the various houses prepare for the ball, we see 'mopping'; and we see the differences among those who walk in the ball as men, those who do drag inside the parameters of the ball, those who cross-dress all the time in the ball and on the street and, among the cross-dressers, those who resist transsexuality, and those who are transsexual in varying degrees. What becomes clear in the enumeration of the kinship system that surrounds the ball is not only that the 'houses' and the 'mothers' and the 'children' sustain the ball, but that the ball is itself an occasion for the building of a set of kinship relations that manage and sustain those who belong to the houses in the face of dislocation, poverty, homelessness. These men 'mother' one another, 'house' one another, 'rear' one another, and the resignification of the family through these terms is not a

vain or useless imitation, but the social and discursive building of community, a community that binds, cares, and teaches, that shelters and enables. This is doubtless a cultural reelaboration of kinship that anyone outside of the privilege of heterosexual family (and those within those 'privileges' who suffer there) needs to see, to know, and to learn from, a task that makes none of us who are outside of heterosexual 'family' into absolute outsiders to this film. Significantly, it is in the elaboration of kinship forged through a resignification of the very terms which effect our exclusion and abjection that such a resignification creates the discursive and social space for community, that we see an appropriation of the terms of domination that turns them toward a more enabling future.

In these senses, then, *Paris Is Burning* documents neither an efficacious insurrection nor a painful resubordination, but an unstable coexistence of both. The film attests to the painful pleasures of eroticizing and miming the very norms that wield their power by foreclosing the very reverse-occupations that the children nevertheless perform.

This is not an appropriation of dominant culture in order to remain subordinated by its terms, but an appropriation that seeks to make over the terms of domination, a making over which is itself a kind of agency, a power in and as discourse, in and as performance, which repeats in order to remake – and sometimes succeeds. But this is a film that cannot achieve this effect without implicating its spectators in the act; to watch this film means to enter into a logic of fetishization which installs the ambivalence of that 'performance' as related to our own. If the ethnographic conceit allows the performance to become an exotic fetish, one from which the audience absents itself, the commodification of heterosexual gender ideals will be, in that instance, complete. But if the film establishes the ambivalence of embodying – and failing to embody – that which one sees, then a distance will be opened up *between* that hegemonic call to normativizing gender and its critical appropriation.

Symbolic reiterations

The resignification of the symbolic terms of kinship in *Paris Is Burning* and in the cultures of sexual minorities represented and occluded by the film raises the question of how precisely the apparently static workings of the symbolic order become vulnerable to subversive repetition and resignification. To understand how this resignification works in the fiction of Willa Cather, a recapitulation of the psychoanalytic account of the formation of sexed bodies is needed. The turn to Cather's fiction involves bringing the question of the bodily ego in Freud and the status of sexual differentiation in Lacan to bear on the question of naming and, particularly, the force of the name in fiction. Freud's contention that the ego is always a bodily ego is elaborated with the further insight that this bodily ego is projected in a field of visual alterity. Lacan insists that the body as a visual projection or imaginary formation cannot be sustained except through submitting to the name, where the 'name' stands for the Name of the Father, the law of sexual differentiation. In 'The Mirror Stage,' Lacan remarks that the ego is produced 'in a fictional direction,' that its contouring and projection are psychic works of fiction; this fictional directionality is arrested and immobilized through the emergence of a symbolic order that legitimates sexually differentiated fictions as 'positions.' As a visual fiction, the ego is inevitably a site of *méconnaissance*; the sexing of the ego by the symbolic seeks to subdue this instability of the ego, understood as an imaginary formation.

Here it seems crucial to ask where and how language emerges to effect this stabilizing function, particularly for the fixing of sexed positions. The capacity of language to fix such positions, that is, to enact its symbolic effects, depends upon the permanence and fixity of the symbolic domain itself, the domain of signifiability or intelligibility.[8] If, for Lacan, the name secures the bodily ego in time, renders it identical through time, and this 'conferring' power of

the name is derived from the conferring power of the symbolic more generally, then it follows that a crisis in the symbolic will entail a crisis in this identity-conferring function of the name, and in the stabilizing of bodily contours according to sex allegedly performed by the symbolic. *The crisis in the symbolic, understood as a crisis over what constitutes the limits of intelligibility, will register as a crisis in the name and in the morphological stability that the name is said to confer.*

The phallus functions as a synecdoche, for insofar as it is a figure of the penis, it constitutes an idealization and isolation of a body part and, further, the investment of that part with the force of symbolic law. If bodies are differentiated according to the symbolic positions that they occupy, and those symbolic positions consist in either having or being the phallus, bodies are thus differentiated and sustained in their differentiation by being subjected to the Law of the Father which dictates the 'being' and 'having' positions; men become men by approximating the 'having of the phallus,' which is to say they are compelled to approximate a 'position' which is itself the result of a synecdochal collapse of masculinity into its 'part' and a corollary idealization of that synecdoche as the governing symbol of the symbolic order. According to the symbolic, then, the assumption of sex takes place through an approximation of this synecdochal reduction. This is the means by which a body assumes sexed integrity as masculine or feminine: the sexed integrity of the body is paradoxically achieved through an identification with its reduction into idealized synecdoche ('having' or 'being' the phallus). The body which fails to submit to the law or occupies that law in a mode contrary to its dictate, thus loses its sure footing – its cultural gravity – in the symbolic and reappears in its imaginary tenuousness, its fictional direction. Such bodies contest the norms that govern the intelligibility of sex.

Is the distinction between the symbolic and the imaginary a stable distinction? And what of the distinction between the name and the bodily ego? Does the name, understood as the linguistic token which designates sex, only work to *cover over* its fictiveness, or are there occasions in which *the fictive and unstable status of that bodily ego trouble the name, expose the name as a crisis in referentiality?* Further, if body parts do not reduce to their phallic idealizations, that is, if they become vectors for other sorts of phantasmatic investments, then to what extent does the synecdochal logic through which the phallus operates lose its differentiating capacity? In other words, the phallus itself presupposes the regulation and reduction of phantasmatic investment such that the penis is either idealized as the phallus or mourned as the scene of castration, and desired in the mode of an impossible compensation. If these investments are deregulated or, indeed, diminished, to what extent can having/being the phallus still function as that which secures the differentiation of the sexes?

In Cather's fiction, the name not only designates a gender uncertainty, but produces a crisis in the figuration of sexed morphology as well. In this sense, Cather's fiction can be read as the foundering and unraveling of the symbolic on its own impossible demands. What happens when the name and the part produce divergent and conflicting sets of sexual expectations? To what extent do the unstable descriptions of gendered bodies and body parts produce a crisis in the referentiality of the name, the name itself as the very fiction it seeks to cover? If the heterosexism of the Lacanian symbolic depends on a set of rigid and prescribed identifications, and if those identifications are precisely what Cather's fiction works through and against the symbolically invested name, then the contingency of the symbolic – and the heterosexist parameters of what qualifies as 'sex' – undergo a rearticulation that works the fictive grounding of what only appears as the fixed limits of intelligibility.

Cather cites the paternal law, but in places and ways that mobilize a subversion under the guise of loyalty. Names fail fully to gender the characters whose femininity and masculinity they are expected to secure. The name fails to sustain the identity of the body within the terms of cultural intelligibility; body parts disengage from any common center, pull away from each other, lead separate lives, become sites of phantasmatic investments that refuse to reduce to singular sexualities. And though it

appears that the normativizing law prevails by forcing suicide, the sacrifice of homosexual eroticism, or closeting homosexuality, the text exceeds the text, the life of the law exceeds the teleology of the law, enabling an erotic contestation and disruptive repetition of its own terms.

Notes

1 Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,' pp. 170–77; see also 'Freud and Lacan,' pp. 189–220; both in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Esssays*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971.

2 Gloria Anzaldúa writes, 'that focal point or fulcrum, that juncture where the mestiza stands, is where phenomena tend to collide' (p. 79) and, later, 'the work of *mestiza* consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner,' 'La conciencia de la mestiza,' *Borderlands/La Frontera*, p. 80.

3 See Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 40.

4 bell hooks, 'Is Paris Burning?' *Z*, Sisters of the Yam column (June 1991): p. 61.

5 Whereas I accept the psychoanalytic formulation that both the object and aim of love are formed *in part* by those objects and aims that are repudiated, I consider it a cynical and homophobic use of that insight to claim that homosexuality is nothing other than repudiated heterosexuality. Given the culturally repudiated status of homosexuality as a form of love, the argument that seeks to reduce homosexuality to the inversion or deflection of heterosexuality functions to reconsolidate heterosexual hegemony. This is also why the analysis of homosexual melancholy cannot be regarded as symmetrical to the analysis of heterosexual melancholy. The latter is culturally enforced in a way that the former clearly is not, except within separatist communities which cannot wield the same power of prohibition as communities of compulsory heterosexism.

6 Kobena Mercer has offered rich work on this question and its relation to a psychoanalytic notion of 'ambivalence.' See 'Looking for Trouble,' reprinted in Henry Abelove, Michèle Barale, and David M. Halperin, eds, *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, New York: Routledge, 1993, pp. 350–59. Originally published in *Transition* 51 (1991); 'Skin Head Sex Thing: Racial Difference and the Homoerotic Imaginary' in Bad Object-Choices, ed., *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video*, Seattle: Bay Press, 1991, pp. 169–210; 'Engendered Species,' *Artforum* vol. 30, no. 10 (Summer 1992): pp. 74–78. See also on the relationship between psychoanalysis, race, and ambivalence, Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse' in *October* 28 (Spring 1984): pp. 125–33.

7 See Linda Singer, *Erotic Welfare: Sexual Theory and Politics in the Age of Epidemic*, New York: Routledge, 1992.

8 For an argument against the construal of the Lacanian symbolic as static and immutable, see Teresa Brennan, *History After Lacan*, London: Routledge, 1993.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Judith Butler

Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.

Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, New York: Routledge, 1990.

Feminists Theorize the Political (edited with J.W. Scott), New York: Routledge, 1992.

Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex', New York: Routledge, 1993.

Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange (with S. Benhabib, D. Cornell, and N. Fraser), New York: Routledge, 1995.

Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative, New York: Routledge, 1997.

The Psychic Life of Power: Theories of Subjection, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.

Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death, New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left (with E. Laclau and S. Žižek), London: Verso, 2000.

What's Left of Theory? New Work on the Politics of Literary Theory (edited with J. Guillory and K. Thomas), New York: Routledge, 2000.

Prejudicial Appearances: The Logic of American Antidiscrimination Law (with R.C. Post, K.A. Appiah, T.C. Grey, and R.B. Siegel), Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.
Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence, London: Verso, 2004.
Undoing Gender, New York: Routledge, 2004.
Giving an Account of Oneself, New York: Fordham University Press, 2005.
Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech (with T. Asad, W. Brown, and S. Mahmood), Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?, London: Verso, 2009.
The Judith Butler Reader, ed. S. Salih with J. Butler, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.

Further reading

Introductions to Butler's work are provided by Brady and Schirato (2010), Jagger (2008), Kirby (2006), and Salih (2002). Carver and Chambers (2008), Chambers and Carver (2008), Lloyd (2007), Loizidou (2007), and White (1999) explore the legal and political implications of her ideas. Her position in relation to feminism and poststructuralism is assessed by Breen and Blumenfeld (2001), Duggan (1998), Kaufman-Osborn (1997), McRobbie (2004), Sandford (1999), and Thiem (2008).

For studies of performativity, see Bell (2008), Loxley (2007), Mills (2000), Nealon (1996), Schwartzman (2002), and Watson (2005) and for discussion of the materiality of language and writing, consult Birkenstein (2010), Hull (1997), Kirby (2002), Nussbaum (1999), and Salih (2003).

Studies of Butler on the body are offered by Loizidou (2008) and Vasterling (1999, 2003), and her account of subjectivity is considered by Borgerson (2005), McNay (1999), Magnus (2006), and Stoetzler (2005). For a reading of her interpretation of Hegel's Antigone, see Johnston (2002), and for the application of her thought to theatre, education, and narrative therapy, see Davies (2007).

V. Bell, 'From performativity to ecology: on Judith Butler and matters of survival', *Subjectivity*, 2008, vol. 25, pp. 395–412.
C. Birkenstein, 'Reconsiderations: we got the wrong gal: rethinking the "bad" academic writing of Judith Butler', *College English*, 2010, vol. 72, pp. 269–83.
J. Borgerson, 'Judith Butler: on organizing subjectivities', *Sociological Review*, 2005, vol. 53, pp. 63–79.
A. Brady and T. Schirato, *Understanding Judith Butler*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2010.
M.S. Breen and W.J. Blumenfeld (eds), *Butler Matters: Judith Butler's Impact on Feminist and Queer Studies*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. Also published as a special edition of *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*, 2001, vol. 6, issues 1–2.
T. Carver and S.A. Chambers (eds), *Judith Butler's Precarious Politics: Critical Encounters*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2008.
S.A. Chambers and T. Carver, *Judith Butler and Political Theory*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2008.
B. Davies (ed.), *Judith Butler in Conversation: Analyzing the Texts and Talk of Everyday Life*, New York: Routledge, 2007.
L. Duggan, 'The theory wars, or, who's afraid of Judith Butler?', *Journal of Women's History*, 1998, vol. 10, pp. 9–19.
C.L. Hull, 'The need in thinking: materiality in Theodor W. Adorno and Judith Butler', *Radical Philosophy*, 1997, vol. 84, pp. 22–35.
G. Jagger, *Judith Butler: Sexual Politics, Social Change and the Power of the Performative*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2008.
A. Johnston, 'The exception and the rule', *Continental Philosophy Review*, 2002, vol. 35, pp. 423–32.
T. Kaufman-Osborn, 'Fashionable subjects: on Judith Butler and the causal idioms of postmodern feminist theory', *Political Research Quarterly*, 1997, vol. 50, pp. 649–74.
V. Kirby, 'When all that is solid melts into language: Judith Butler and the question of matter', *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*, 2002, vol. 7, pp. 265–80.
———, *Judith Butler: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2006.
M. Lloyd, *Judith Butler: From Norms to Politics*, Cambridge: Polity, 2007.
E. Loizidou, *Judith Butler: Ethics, Law, Politics*, Abingdon: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007.
———, 'The body figural and material in the work of Judith Butler', *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, 2008, vol. 28, pp. 29–52.

J. Loxley, *Performativity*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2007.
L. McNay, 'Subject, psyche and agency: the work of Judith Butler', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1999, vol. 16, pp. 175–94.
A. McRobbie, 'Feminism and the socialist tradition... undone? A response to recent work by Judith Butler', *Cultural Studies*, 2004, vol. 18, pp. 503–22.
K.D. Magnus, 'The unaccountable subject: Judith Butler and the social conditions of intersubjective agency', *Hypatia*, 2006, vol. 21, pp. 81–103.
C. Mills, 'Efficacy and vulnerability: Judith Butler on reiteration and resistance', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 2000, vol. 32, pp. 265–80.
J.T. Nealon, 'Between emergence and possibility: Foucault, Derrida, and Judith Butler on performative identity', *Philosophy Today*, 1996, vol. 40, pp. 430–39.
M.C. Nussbaum, 'The professor of parody: the hip, defeatist feminism of Judith Butler', *New Republic*, 22 February 1999. Online. Available HTTP: http://www.akad.se/Nussbaum.pdf (accessed 22 July 2010).
S. Salih, *Judith Butler*, London: Routledge, 2002.
———, 'Judith Butler and the ethics of "difficulty"', *Critical Quarterly*, 2003, vol. 45, pp. 42–51.
S. Sandford, 'Contingent ontologies: sex, gender and "woman" in Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler', *Radical Philosophy*, 1999, vol. 97, pp. 18–29.
L.H. Schwartzman, 'Hate speech, illocution, and social context: a critique of Judith Butler', *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 2002, vol. 33, pp. 421–41.
M. Stoetzler, 'Subject trouble: Judith Butler and dialectics', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 2005, vol. 31, pp. 343–68.
A. Thiem, *Unbecoming Subjects: Judith Butler, Moral Philosophy, and Critical Responsibility*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.
V. Vasterling, 'Butler's sophisticated constructivism: a critical assessment', *Hypatia*, 1999, vol. 14, pp. 17–38.
———, 'Body and language: Butler, Merleau-Ponty and Lyotard on the speaking embodied subject', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 2003, vol. 11, pp. 205–23.
J. Watson, 'Schizo-performativity? Neurosis and politics in Judith Butler and Félix Guattari', *Women*, 2005, vol. 16, pp. 305–20.
S.K. White, 'As the world turns: ontology and politics in Judith Butler', *Polity*, 1999, vol. 32, pp. 155–78.

Chapter 28

PAUL VIRILIO

INTRODUCTION

The relation between aesthetics, politics, and technology is the axis of Paul Virilio's (b. 1932) philosophy. Acceleration, he declares, is the dominant form which has been given to modern life by technology and, specifically, technology determined by military and industrial imperatives. Phenomenology is arguably the strongest influence on Virilio's work. He trained as a painter, studying under Henri Matisse, Georges Braque, Bazaine, and de Stael. He later studied philosophy under Merleau-Ponty at the Sorbonne, although Husserl and Heidegger were also key figures for him. Virilio regards much of his work as 'dromological' analysis, from his own coinage of the term 'dromology', meaning the logic or science or (given his influences, what might also be understood as the) phenomenology of speed. For example, in *The Vision Machine* (1994), following Paul Klee's observation that 'now objects perceive me' (a central concern of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of vision and painting), Virilio argues that the speed operative in the production of the high-resolution photographic image becomes the creation of desire. Far from being a mere representation of an object, the high-resolution photographic image expands the possibilities of advertising and, in the context of a billboard hoarding, becomes '*will*, the will to engage the future' in as much as people will seek out the object depicted.[1] *Objects perceive me* because, as Virilio indicates, it is not just the image which has a high resolution; rather, resolution, the intention to act, has passed now to human reality.

Virilio's early writings focus on the organization of territory and the acceleration of human perception realized by military technologies, e.g. *Speed and Politics: An Essay on Dromology* (1977), *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception* (1989), *Bunker Archaeology* (1994), and *The Vision Machine* (1994). More recently, his interest in perception has led him to address the threat of the collapse of the distinction between the human body and technology. He insists the distinction must be maintained, and criticizes cyberfeminism for being, as Armitage puts it, 'one more form of technological fundamentalism'.[2] Relevant works here include: *Open Sky* (1997), *Politics of the Very Worst* (1999), and *The Information Bomb* (2000). Other books, such as *Art and Fear* (2000) and *Art as Far as the Eye Can See* (2007), have accused contemporary art of denying its own political force through complicity with technological vision.

The Virilio extract in this volume is Part 4 from *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (1991). It is an important work in as much as it is the first, full working out of the aesthetics of disappearance, a notion that informs all of his subsequent thought. Baldly put, technological perception is causing vital human attributes to disappear. According to Armitage, Virilio sees 'the globalization of the techno-scientific propaganda of cloning' as amounting to 'the new science of human disappearance'.[3] The book runs through an array of what Virilio terms 'picnolepsies':

losses or absences which occur because the speed with which an image or representation has been generated means that there are moments or aspects which fail to appear or fail to be experienced. The reference to 'epilepsy' is significant for Virilio's stance in two respects. First, it brings with it the original Greek meaning of 'surprise', which Virilio thinks motorized images are prone to cause, as in the case quoted by Virilio of Aldous Huxley who wore dark glasses to shield himself from the surprise of 'the sudden onset of the image'.[4] Second, it draws upon the neurological finding that an epileptic crisis results from 'a hyper-synchronous discharge of a population of neurons', an event whose concentration in an instant and resultant loss of consciousness informs Virilio's perspective on technology. Examples of picnolepsy include the overturning of a cup on the breakfast table (it happens too quickly for it to be noticed),[5] aerial photography of signs of the enemy in a territory as a precursor to the bombardment of those signs,[6] and the transition from 'visible' red, through field-grey, to 'invisible' khaki in the design of army uniforms.[7] In the final part, reproduced here, Virilio argues that the effects of picnolepsy are such that consciousness disappears 'as the direct perception of phenomena that inform us of our own existence', and our technologically dependent state becomes one in which 'the conquest of speed and the search for treasure' are blended together. The chapter is also notable for Virilio's gnomic remark '*the motor proceeds from the soul*', which demands careful, critical appraisal in the context of a thesis that asserts the disappearance of the human through the technological.

Notes

1 P. Virilio, *The Vision Machine*, trans. J. Rose, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994, p. 64.
2 J. Armitage, 'Beyond postmodernism? Paul Virilio's hypermodern cultural theory', *CTheory.net*, 2000. Online. Available HTTP: http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=133#text2 (accessed 5 October 2009).
3 J. Armitage, 'Art and fear: an introduction', in P. Virilio, *Art and Fear*, trans. J. Rose, London: Continuum, 2003, p. 10.
4 P. Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, trans. P. Beitchman, New York: Semiotext(e), 1991, p. 51.
5 Ibid., p. 9.
6 Ibid., pp. 56–57.
7 Ibid., p. 89.

■ ■ ■

THE AESTHETICS OF DISAPPEARANCE PART IV

PAUL VIRILIO

The Hurried Man of Paul Morand is astounded by a cinematographic slow motion of a plane accident: 'The plane grazes the ground, which then opens the plane up more delicately than a gourmet peels his fig…'; the most violent, murderous shock seems as sweet as a sequence of kisses. We've since improved on this visual impression by producing collisions experimentally, populating them with cadavers, filming them at different speeds and with the help of various cameras.[1]

After man's walking, then his dancing, what's given over to film is the slow choreography associating dead bodies with vehicular motion, a sort of amorous revelation for the couple formed by technophilia and speed, *which in telescoping two caresses makes for a mortal mess.*

The cinematic motor has accustomed us to finding the mystery of movement in this transitory world natural, to no longer wonder how acceleration of amorous gesture can suddenly become murderous, how the Pavan dance of a falling or propelled body can become fatal. At the same time this vulgarized violence of movement, revealed by the distortion of vision, shows us its inconsistency; the violence of speed dominates the technical world but remains nevertheless, as in the time of the Sphinx, the basic enigma.

When Mountbatten was assassinated, in the month of August 1979, a witness, Brian Wakely, recounts: 'There was a boat – there – and suddenly there is nothing. I was on a dinghy that Mountbatten's boat had just grazed. I heard the noise of the explosion only after seeing it blown to bits!'

This feeling of supernatural strangeness, we experienced it, for example, during the bombardments of the last war: the explosion in sheaves of flowers and smoke of an art work happening far away, but within eyesight and in total silence. The dust had already settled when we finally became aware of the noise of the explosion. Speed again ostensibly perverts the illusory order of normal perception, the order of arrival of information. What could have seemed simultaneous is diversified and decomposes. With speed, the world keeps on coming at us, to the detriment of the object, which is itself now assimilated to the sending of information. It is this intervention that destroys the world as we know it, technique finally reproducing permanently the violence of the accident; the mystery of speed remains a secret of light and heat from which even sound is missing.

The techniques of rationality have ceaselessly distanced us from what we've taken as the advent of an objective world: the rapid tour, the accelerated transport of people, signs or things, reproduce – by aggravating them – the effects of picnolepsy, since they provoke a perpetually repeated hijacking of the subject from any spatial-temporal context.

From the very inception of the transportation revolution certain persons had the merit of discerning in the desire for movement, peregrination, voyage, more of a desire for the discovery of speed than any far-off elsewhere.

In 1903 Bierbaum declaims against this tendency: 'Speed is not the goal!' He himself is searching for what he calls a *humanist speed* without which, he warns, 'we would be embarking on a "carriage of fools" (*Narrenkutsche*) that takes the place of the Ship of Fools; speed must become a particular cultural aspect that serves collective culture.'

But what, exactly, does culture as we understand it here, have to do with the kind of kicks sought by characters such as d'Annunzio or Georg Müller, who affirm that vehicular speed 'allows us to think of nothing, to feel nothing, to attain indifference'; we might say that this anchoritic speed is literally the end of bourgeois culture, the reaction against exoticism and the lyricism of the voyage, 'this Baroque beyond that has been in style since the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries with the first railroads.'[2]

From the very beginning the search for high speeds was combined with destructive games of war and hunting, creators of elites. This is how war has been transformed from tedious work, where the elites were only servants of the weapons systems, into a more comfortable instrument, under the influence of the engineers, an indolence (Vauban). The exploitation of high speeds naturally becomes a sport reserved for dandy-warriors, a fantasy allowed to people who are otherwise useless, a new form of idleness permitted the well-to-do, which will make them regard movement itself as a life-style, 'combining risk and comfort,' said Marshall Goering, himself a drug addict and notorious dandy. From now on the traveller, in peopling the modes of rapid transport, becomes a negator of terrestrial dimensions.

Around 1920 Rageot writes: 'Today's traveller can say: I am an inhabitant of earth, just as if he were saying: I am an inhabitant of Asnières… There are travellers who no longer even know they're travelling.'

Endosmosis of the living being produced by technical acceleration; Craig Breedlove, holder of the world land speed record in 1955, entitles the preface to a book of memories: '*Doing something other than merely living*,' and he notes: 'Why does man aspire to these terrifying speeds, entering a wheeled vehicle powerful enough not only to carry him off to glory but also to tear him to pieces?'

If all is movement all is at the same time accident and our existence as metabolic vehicle can be summed up as a series of collisions, of traumatisms, some taking on the quality of slow but perceptible caresses; but all this, according to the impulsions lent them, becomes mortal shocks and apotheoses of fire, but above all *a different mode of being.* Speed is a cause of death for which we're not only responsible but of which we are also the creators and inventors – so it's been said.

As a young man I wondered about the aesthetics of war machines, what I called in my inner sanctum their enigma. I found myself often contemplating a bunker or the silhouette of some submarine seen at a distance, wondering why their polished forms were so inscrutable and where did their kind of plastic invisibility come from?

At first I related this to zoomorphism, to metamorphism, but all of that was comparison, imitation and could not satisfy me. Then I believed these forms were inscrutable because they all related to speeds that were different, excessive, and thus fatally reflecting another image of the universe meant to fill up other times; they belonged to other worlds which are invisible to the naked eye, yet something of which remained with them. But the over-production of movement implied by war changed the way things looked; the motor, since it relates directly to the state of paradoxical wakefulness, replaced the causal idea – that was its revolution; *the motor proceeds from the soul.*

And so when the playful Méliès disguises himself as Satan of the operetta, doesn't he hit the nail right on the head: the tree of the motor is the tree of knowledge (science), corruption of sight is corruption of life!

In the last century we had already become aware of the paradox of speed: 'The train doesn't make voyagers of us but packages that are expedited…' remarked Tolstoy. The hurried man of Morand ruminates: 'We need to find something even more idiotic to block the course of time completely, total abstention from all action…' To say today that speed is obsolete is an untruth as obvious as that which consists in praising slowness. Hughes was already aping our technical future: the abandonment of the vehicular speed of bodies for the strangely impressive one of light vectors; the internment of bodies is no longer in the cinematic cell of travel but in a cell outside of time, which would be an electronic terminal where we'd leave it up to the instruments to organize our most intimate vital rhythms, without ever changing position ourselves, the authority of electronic automatism reducing our will to zero… somehow the vision of light moving on a screen would have replaced all personal movement.

'We can imagine for the future,' writes Charles Schreider, 'a transformation (of reality) into video signals stored on tape, or better yet *a decomposition and coding of images in digital signals capable of storage in various materials…*'

The development of high technical speeds would thus result in the disappearance of consciousness as the direct perception of phenomena that inform us of our own existence.

Technology introduces a phenomenon without precedent in the mediation of time, for if we've affirmed that time is only one reality, that of the instant, we might also say with Guyon, as the motor is being invented: 'The idea of time can be reduced to a point of view: duration is made of transitory instants just as a straight line is made of points without depth.'

Dimensions vanish in the reduction of straightness or of a straightaway, which would be only the speed of a geometric trajectory. The will to carry out whatever is possible, contained in diverse applications of the exact sciences, has led to a new atrophy of the instant, as essentially

involving a before and an after. By introducing the subject into the hierarchy of speeds (lower, higher), by destabilizing the instant, a contingent phenomenon, the standards are abrogated; the diversifying of speed also abrogates the sensation of general duration, of continuous movement. Méliès understood early on that cinema is *not a seventh art but an art that combines all of the others*: drawing, painting, architecture, music, but also mechanical, electrical works, etc.

Cinema is the end in which the dominant philosophies and arts have come to confuse and lose themselves, a sort of primordial mixing of the human soul and the languages of the motor-soul. The chronology of the arts in history already demonstrates this decomposition: for example, at a concert the extreme emphasis on auditory attention annihilates any other body movement, revealing the basic connection between the musical instrument (a veritable sound motor with its cylinders, rhythms) and speed – properly the manna of every listener.

As Ribot writes in *The Psychology of Attention*: 'Without the motor elements perception is impossible…' And R. Philip establishes, for example, a 'measurement' of the listener's attention: 'Music modifies the respiratory and cardiac rhythm which is slowed down or speeded up,' as in visual attention, if associated with an obligatory eye movement, it is also linked to an inevitable inhibition of bodily movements.[3]

Shortly before his death Nero, back in Naples, stopped to admire a new musical instrument, a water organ invented, according to Vitruvius, by Ctesibius of Alexandria: it looked like an elongated buffet covered with tubes. Nero's bright idea, then, is to play the organ while confronting his enemies, thinking he will thereby win them over. Nero's pretension is not so unrealistic: at a concert, when the musical motor shuts off, not only is there a liberating violence of ovations and handclapping but also a thunderstorm of sneezing, coughing, scraping of feet – as if everyone suddenly reacquired possession of his own body. The very development of symphonic music ends up with the orchestra leader in the privileged position of *sole conductor*, but what he directs is not only the increasingly numerous musical troop but also the mass of auditors he's responsible for immobilizing in their chairs… to openly leave one's seat becomes here the most devastating of musical critiques!

Technician-culture has only extended this assumption of control by motor elements, steadily increasing our dependency on directional systems of accountability and control (speedometers, dashboards, remote tele-control). Initiating itineraries of direction, technician-culture applies to earth and nature (human nature) Bacon's formula: *Nothing is vaster than empty things…* creating finally emptiness and desert because only nothingness can be continuous, and therefore conductive.

Rather than trying for speed records in the vast celestial spaces, champions like Art Afrons declare that *the most exciting, exalting, dynamic task that exists consists in attempting intellectually, physically and technically the land speed record on our mother earth… a work of love*, he specifies, and the word does not seem unintended.

Likewise Malcolm Campbell, a former RAF pilot, sees sensations of flight as insipid and less intoxicating compared to those he tasted on land on board the various 'blue-birds.'

In fact, the passion for speed had seized him in early youth, writes Leo Villa, at the same time as the passion for those mysterious stories which always involved *hidden treasures waiting for the heroes able to unearth them.*

As an adult he was going to try to realize these several dreams.[4]

Therefore the earth (ground-effect) seems paradoxically to remain the privileged partner of the seeker of absolute records, to whom nevertheless she exposes the dangers of natural obstacles, gravity, etc., the speed record coming as much from the search for new technical blends as from that of planed, smoothed surfaces. The vastness of space is no longer sought except as a means of putting into question the experience of discontinuity. 'Time and space

seem infinite to us only when they don't exist,' Roupnel suggested. The immediacy of terrestrial transport, modifying the relation to space, annihilates the relation to lived time and it's in this urgency that its dynamic exaltation consists. Paradoxically, it's the extreme mobility which creates the inertia of the moment, instantaneity which would create the instant! Finally the instant becomes like the illusory perception of a stability, clearly revealed by technical prostheses, such as is demonstrated for us by Einstein's example of passing trains: the feeling of the instant can only be given by coincidence (*epiteikos*), the moment when two trains seem immobile to travellers while they are really launched at top speed one beside the other. The notion of a time, which, according to Bachelard, would accommodate only the reality of the instant, could only be established on the basis of our remaining unconscious of our own speeds in a world entirely given over to the law of movement *and thereby the creator of the illusion of inertia.*

What creates the difference between the diverse intuitions of time is the position in space of the reasoning consciousness, a little like in Edgar Poe's allegory, *The Gold Bug*, where the seeker has to commit himself to numerous speculations on the cryptogramic significance of the message, before moving in any given direction.

This mobility of the synoptic trajectory, in modifying the subject's point-of-view, is going to allow him the discovery of what, somehow, was already visible. Beyond that one is led back ineluctably to the fascination of the shiny bug, which is initiatory in the sense that, as the perspective point on an horizon of speed, it reduces the rest of the world to nothing. Passing from the course to the finish line, technique has been applied to make of this modification of perspective the supreme goal that it's eager to reach. The motor creates an unprecedented movement toward what eludes everyone's view and understanding (the treasure), like a tale about unseen things, involving the kind of space and time of metaphysical entities deprived of all reality, that Gastineau wrote about in the 19th century.

The conquest of speed and the search for treasure blend together absolutely in the longings of Malcolm Campbell, while the heyday of utopian tales, in general, is that of far-off expeditions, of the Renaissance quest of the Golden Fleece or the bellicose romanticism of the 19th century.

Reconciliation of nothingness and reality, the annihilation of time and space by high speeds substitutes the vastness of emptiness for that of the exoticism of travel, which was obvious for people like Heine who saw in this very annihilation the supreme goal of technique.[5] A little later the maniacs of aerodynamics and land speed records articulate this also, considering as primordial the reaction of the milieu to the object's form-in-movement and vice-versa. Their purpose is to create time out of everything, a time that would no longer be one, where, as Breedlove writes, *one simply exists*, a time that would be on earth yet nowhere. In the science fiction film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, extraterrestrials, accustomed to circulating in the immensity of intergalactic space, are enormously pleased to be travelling on a simple highway. Meanwhile the earthlings are enjoying hugely the paradox of this relation between pleasure and violation of limits, an exaltation which resembles closely enough that of the mountain climber who doesn't want so much to scale the peak as level off and flatten the mountain.

Chevallier notices it also: from Egyptian antiquity on we have geography, but also *chorography*,[6] almost entirely neglected by the historian – a figure of the road-building surge of Empires, as distinct from the mere mapping out of its territory. In spite of the transportation revolution of the 19th century, our historical discourse has remained tied to a culture based on a common conception of space and time, while contemporaneously a new life style was being worked out, a cultural innovation consisting in a new reading of duration, if only in the plain example of the railroad, of its network schedules with their complex interconnections, unprecedented chorography that had to be made understandable for every traveller. There is no longer involved in this practice any rapport between a pretension to live one's own unique historical time and this

manner of suddenly finding oneself in motion and in transit in railroad car compartments, that are also, for their user, compartments of space and time. The administration of transportation confirms Bachelard's observation: 'After Einstein's relativity, metaphysics had to retreat to local time, everything having to do with the external proof of unique duration as a clear principle of ordination of events was ruined…' Einstein's theory completed the destruction of a Pharaonic conception of signs as immobile bodies immutably arrayed against the passing of time, capable of resurging in History, of resuscitating in the beyond… a conception that explains clearly enough the cult of mausoleums as well as doctrinaire survivals in Marxist countries, attached to the idea of a unique historical duration.

That the totalitarian European regimes would be hostile to Einstein's theories was also to be expected, since time with them appears less given than locally invented, and it was equally to be expected that Einstein, in spite of himself, be drawn into the tragic confrontation with total war, which in 1939 became the war of time(s).

However, in this new kind of conflict, it is already no longer a matter of local times; the history of battles revealed de-localization as precipitation toward an ultimate metaphysical record, a final oblivion of matter and of our own presence in the world, beyond the barrier of sound and soon of light.

Translated by Philip Beitchman

Notes

1 'Special models' (S.M.) are human bodies, *fresh and in good condition*, used by Renault for research into automobile safety. A thousand S.M. have been used in the last few years at the Landy Center, in the Paris region.
2 *Vitesse et vision du monde*, Claude Pichois, éditions de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel.
3 *L'Art de voir*, A. Huxley, chez Payot.
4 *Les Tombeurs de records* (*The Record Breakers*), Leo Villa, chez Hatier. 'Constant observer for 45 years, the Campbell's mechanic, Léo Villa, says that for the father as well as the son the only thing that counted was being the fastest man in the world. Donald Campbell, going over 444 km/h aboard his jet powered speedboat, disintegrated in an explosion in January 1967.'
5 'Through the railroads space has been abolished and the only thing left for us is time…' *Lutèce*, Heine, Éditions Michel Lévy frères, 1855.
6 *Les Voies romaines*, Raymond Chevallier, librairie Armand Colin, 1972. 'We expected to find, notably in their historians, precise information about the construction of roads, the basis for Roman power. None of that information exists, history in Rome being, above all, political and psychological…'

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Paul Virilio in English

Bunker Archaeology (1975), trans. G. Collins, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004.
Speed and Politics (1977), trans. M. Polizzotti, New York: Semiotext(e), 1986.
Popular Defense and Ecological Struggles (1978), trans. M. Polizzotti, New York: Semiotext(e), 1990.
The Aesthetics of Disappearance (1980), trans. P. Beitchman, New York: Semiotext(e), 1991.
Pure War (with S. Lotringer; 1983), trans. M. Polizzotti, New York: Semiotext(e), 1997.
Negative Horizon: An Essay in Dromoscopy (1984), trans. M. Degener, London: Continuum, 2006.
War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception (1984), trans. P. Camiller, New York: Semiotext(e), 1989.
The Lost Dimension (1984), trans. D. Moshenberg, New York: Semiotext(e), 1991.
The Vision Machine (1988), trans. J. Rose, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Polar Inertia (1990), trans. P. Camiller, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2000.
Desert Screen: War at the Speed of Light (1991), trans. M. Degener, London: Continuum, 2005.
The Art of the Motor (1993), trans. J. Rose, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
Open Sky (1995), trans. J. Rose, London: Verso, 1997.
Politics of the Very Worst: An Interview by Philippe Petit (1996), ed. S. Lotringer, trans. M. Cavaliere, New York: Semiotext(e), 1999.
A Landscape of Events (1997), trans. J. Rose, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000.
The Information Bomb (1998), trans. C. Turner, London: Verso, 2005.
Strategy of Deception (1999), trans. M. Jenkins, London: Verso, 2007.
Art and Fear (2000), trans. J. Rose, London: Continuum, 2006.
Crepuscular Dawn (with S. Lotringer), New York: Semiotext(e), 2002.
Ground Zero (2002), trans. C. Turner, London: Verso, 2002.
City of Panic (2003), trans. J. Rose, Oxford: Berg, 2005.
Unknown Quantity, London: Thames and Hudson, 2003.
The Original Accident (2005), trans. J. Rose, Cambridge: Polity, 2007.
Art as Far as the Eye Can See (2005), trans. J. Rose, Oxford: Berg, 2007.
The Accident of Art (with S. Lotringer), New York: Semiotext(e), 2005.
University of Disaster (2007), trans. J. Rose, Cambridge: Polity, 2010.
Raymond Depardon: Manhattan Out (with R. Depardon), Göttingen: Steidl, 2009.
The Futurism of the Instant (2009), trans. J. Rose, Cambridge: Polity, 2010.
Native Land (with R. Depardon), London: Thames and Hudson, 2009.
Grey Ecology, ed. H. von Amelunxen, trans. D. Burk, New York: Atropos Press, 2009.
The Virilio Reader, ed. J. Der Derian, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.
Virilio Live: Selected Interviews, ed. J. Armitage, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2001.
The Paul Virilio Reader, ed. S. Redhead, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Further reading

Introductions to Virilio are offered by James (2007), Redhead (2004), and Rose (2007). Armitage has put together two collections of critical essays (2000, 2011). For accounts of Virilio on aesthetics, culture, and politics, see Bray (2008), Hanes (1996), Leach (1999), Milestone (2007), Telotte (2000), and Zurbrugg (1999). Armitage (2010), Crogan (1999), Cubitt (1999), Der Derian (1999), James (2006), McAllister (2008), and McGuire (1999) concentrate upon Virilio's theories of media and technology, while Featherstone (2003), Gane (1999), and Kellner (1999) consider his writings on war.

J. Armitage (ed.), *Paul Virilio: From Modernism to Hypermodernism and Beyond*, London: Sage, 2000. Also published as a special issue of *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1999, vol. 16, issues 5–6.
———, *Virilio and the Media*, Cambridge: Polity, 2010.
——— (ed.), *Virilio Now: Current Perspectives in Virilio Studies*, Cambridge: Polity, 2011.
P.M. Bray, 'Aesthetics in the shadow of no towers: reading Virilio in the twenty-first century', *Yale French Studies*, 2008, vol. 114, pp. 4–17.
P. Crogan, 'Theory of state: Deleuze, Guattari and Virilio on the state, technology and speed', *Angelaki*, 1999, vol. 4, pp. 137–48.
S. Cubitt, 'Virilio and new media', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1999, vol. 16, pp. 127–42.
J. Der Derian, 'The conceptual cosmology of Paul Virilio', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1999, vol. 16, pp. 215–28.
M. Featherstone, 'The eye of war: images of destruction in Virilio and Bataille', *Journal for Cultural Research*, 2003, vol. 7, pp. 433–47.
M. Gane, 'Paul Virilio's bunker theorizing', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1999, vol. 16, pp. 85–102.
M. Hanes, 'Paul Virilio and the articulation of post-reality', *Human Studies*, 1996, vol. 19, pp. 185–97.
I. James, 'Phenomenology in diaspora: Paul Virilio and the question of technology', *French Cultural Studies*, 2006, vol. 17, pp. 319–34.
———, *Paul Virilio*, New York: Routledge, 2007.
D. Kellner, 'Virilio, war and technology: some critical reflections', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1999, vol. 16, pp. 103–26.
N. Leach, 'Virilio and architecture', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1999, vol. 16, pp. 71–84.

K.E. McAllister, 'Virilio: mimesis, mourning, and modern technology', *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 2008, vol. 33, pp. 567–90.
S. McGuire, 'Binded by the (speed of) light', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1999, vol. 16, pp. 143–59.
J. Milestone, 'Design as power: Paul Virilio and the governmentality of design expertise', *Culture, Theory and Critique*, 2007, vol. 48, pp. 175–98.
S. Redhead, *Paul Virilio: Theorist for an Accelerated Culture*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004.
J. Rose, *Paul Virilio: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2007.
J.P. Telotte, 'Verhoeven, Virilio, and "cinematic derealization"', *Film Quarterly*, 2000, vol. 53, pp. 30–38.
N. Zurbrugg, 'Virilio, Stelarc and "terminal" technoculture', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1999, vol. 16, pp. 177–200.

PART 6

Poststructuralism and Postmodernism

Introduction

THE TERMS 'POSTSTRUCTURALISM' AND 'POSTMODERNISM' are often used interchangeably. They have distinct but related meanings. In some cases, when the context is general or unspecific, the distinction can be blurred; in others, however, it is important to observe their differences, especially when one bears in mind their antecedents, structuralism and modernism. The modern is characterized by man's self-image as an autonomous, rational being, distinct from God, who, through reason and sensory experience, is able to know and manipulate the world. Modernism – modern aesthetic practice and debate – is a facet of this: dependent upon the techniques and technologies which the manipulation and understanding of the world have brought, and preoccupied with the medium of representation (paint, sound, words) either as something expressive in its own right or as something which can open up a new, non-imitative perspective on the world.

'Postmodernism' refers to the ideas and beliefs which follow from or emerge in response to modern thought. More specifically, it is a reaction against the excesses of modernism. It contests the model of an absolute, all-seeing reason, distinct from the contingencies of its physical environment and incapable of accommodating diversity. As Horkheimer and Adorno argue in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), Stalin, Hitler, Auschwitz, and Hiroshima are all demonstrations of what happens when truth is conceived as the shaping of the world in accordance with a universal template. Postmodernism is, therefore, suspicious of all claims to universal truth. In response, through the various forms in which it is manifest, it promotes recognition of the contingent, historical, constructed aspects of cultural practice. For example, the Lloyds building in London and the Pompidou Centre in Paris are considered exemplars of postmodern architecture because vital elements of construction and orientation normally hidden or kept inside, such as joints, ducting, stairwells, are made prominent and placed outside.

However, while it represents the restoration of materiality to thought, intention, and design, the postmodern is not a complete rejection of the modern. Such 'start-from-scratch' strategies only amount to placing confidence once again in a historical, clear, and distinct perception, and thus represent a forgetting of the past and all that should be learned from it. In 'Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?', Lyotard avows that postmodernism is most visible in the processes of

critique and reassessment which have driven the revolutions in modernism: 'postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant'.[1] A *modern* aesthetic, he suggests, promotes consistent, recognizable forms of representation, whereas a *postmodern* aesthetic 'denies itself the solace of good forms' and 'searches for new presentations' which can 'impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable'.[2] Thus, for Lyotard, the postmodern works within the modern to draw attention to the mechanisms which have served the will to truth as processes or forms in their own right. The aesthetic is a crucial category for postmodernism. Its history as a realm of experience which exceeds conceptualization means that it represents a source of resistance to universal, reductive generalizations. Although modern figures such as Kant, Hegel, and some phenomenologists might try to enlist the aesthetic as that which motivates or completes abstract thought, much postmodern theory sets out to problematize or undermine these attempts.

Structuralism and poststructuralism are decisive movements in the demonstration of the material, constructed nature of knowledge. Structuralism originates in the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) and, in particular, his *Course in General Linguistics*, compiled after his death by his students and published in 1916.[3] Saussure's theory acquires its name because he asks us to think of language as a web-like structure. His main concern is not language in use, what he refers to as *parole*, an on-going, evolving body of utterances, but the cross-sectional relationships which define language as a system at any one moment, what he calls *langue*.

Saussure is challenging the traditional nomenclature theory of language. This theory treats words as labels. In the history of ideas stretching from Platonic idealism, through the emergence of science in the seventeenth century, to nineteenth-century positivism, it is assumed that language has meaning because words hook onto things or experiences in a one-to-one relationship. In reply, Saussure argues that meaning is a property of the internal, structural relationships each word has with the others in the web. There is nothing tree-like about the word 'tree'. There is no necessary correspondence between a signifier (the physical property of a sign, e.g. the sound or ink-pattern 'tree') and a signified (the concept or meaning we associate with the signifier). Their relationship, he asserts, is purely arbitrary.[4] If this is the case, how do signs acquire meaning? Saussure offers his concept of 'linguistic value' in response: each word has meaning purely because it is distinct from the other possible words which could be used; each part of the web is defined in terms of the other parts. For example, in the case of the near-synonyms 'to dread', 'to fear' and 'to be afraid', 'to dread' has its particular meaning or value because it isn't 'to fear' or 'to be afraid'.

Furthermore, articulation in sound is linked with articulation in thought. Our capacity to handle the world conceptually and our capacity to utter different sounds or make different marks are correlated and enfolded. Thought, which, for Descartes, was clear and distinct and *distinct from* matter, is suddenly *equated with* matter. Language, Saussure claims, acts

> as intermediary between thought and sound, in such a way that the combination of both necessarily produces a mutually complementary delimitation of units. Thought, chaotic by nature, is made precise by this process of segmentation. But what happens is neither a transformation of thoughts into matter, nor a transformation of sounds into ideas. What takes place, is a somewhat mysterious process by which 'thought-sound' evolves divisions, and a language takes shape with its linguistic units in between those two amorphous masses. One might think of it as being like air in contact with water: changes in atmospheric pressure break up the surface of the water into series of divisions, i.e. waves. The correlation between thought and sound, and the union of the two, is like that.[5]

It is hard to over-estimate the importance of these developments. Meaning is shown to be differential, that is, not to reside in single categories, and, because of its structural nature, to

have an autonomy distinct from the intention of the author. One cannot touch one part of the web without causing vibrations in other parts and, therefore, creating associations beyond those that were originally intended. Regarding texts as autonomous and internally structured means there is a new dimension of meaning to be explored. In the 1960s and 1970s, theorists working in other subjects realized that their own fields of enquiry could be analysed structurally, e.g. Christian Metz in film theory, Claude Lévi-Strauss in anthropology, Michel Serres in the philosophy of science, and Roland Barthes in semiotics and cultural theory.

While structuralism shows that meaning is a consequence of relationships internal to the medium of signification, *post*structuralism builds upon this internalism to challenge traditional notions of authorship, intention, meaning, and truth. Poststructuralism can be regarded as an extension of the disturbing and destabilizing effects which structuralism has on the traditional (nomenclature) belief that words give us the world. It contributes to postmodernism's reconceptualization and materialization of knowledge by drawing attention to the way in which concepts and ideas, through their own internal thickness, create meanings and possibilities that divert intention or expectation and exceed any claim to final truth. This furthers the political project of establishing plural, multivocal forms of representation. The poststructuralist text is often performative: its impact or affectability will come not only from *what is stated* but also from the *way it is stated*. Language ceases to be the tool we wield in order to manipulate the world and becomes something we have to grapple with, which can surprise or resist us. This makes the text less a disinterested judgment 'from on-high' and more an intervention 'at ground level'.

Postmodernism brings the understanding that conceptual frameworks impose contingent, rather than necessary, divisions on the world and, therefore, any univocal claim to truth will exclude or leave unheard other forms of experience. It is this project of reconceptualization, of transforming the identity of an object through adopting a new perspective in relation to it, to which the excesses of poststructuralism belong. The six authors in this section illustrate the diversity of ways in which language opens new possibilities through disruption. They also show that Paris is, without a doubt, the capital of postmodernist and poststructuralist thought, since five of the six writers are French. Paul de Man is the exception, from Belgium.

Poststructuralism has its dissenters, however. Some would describe these texts as playful; some would say they are difficult; others might go so far as to call them nonsense. Contemporary French theory is sometimes criticized for its level of jargon and the often unfathomable prose which results. It is all very well making grand claims about pluralization and the exploration of limits, critics exclaim, but all we have ended up with are self-legitimizing discourses of buzz-words and free-for-all arguments which refuse to engage with or find themselves answerable to any form of realism.[6] The criticisms arise because the verbal and terminological freedom which often accompanies reconceptualization makes it hard to get a definite purchase on the material, and gives the impression that the grain of the real world is not impinging upon the theorist's claims.

My intention here is not to pursue the debate, but simply to point out that it exists. The relationship between understanding and writing style is itself a philosophical issue. We think about texts metaphorically: their 'accessibility', whether or not they are 'clear' or 'hard', their 'difficulty', having to work 'against them', and there are interesting arguments for and against the cultivation of 'obscure' prose. It is enough to say in conclusion that, in the twentieth century, the boundaries between art, literature, and philosophy are no longer solid. There can still be statements 'about' the world but just what this 'aboutness' involves cannot be neatly categorized and identified with one form of representation or another. We should not be in too much of a rush to 'see through' these texts, to reduce them to a thesis. This would be like equating a film with its synopsis. Reality surprises us the most when we bump up against it. These texts offer similar resistance.

Notes

1 J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Manchester: Manchester University Press; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 79.
2 Ibid., p. 81.
3 F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. R. Harris, London: Duckworth, 1983.
4 Saussure is not the first to make this point. It is already present in Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation* (1818, 1844) and Nietzsche's 'On Truth and Lie in an Extramoral Sense' (1873); the latter appears in this volume.
5 Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, pp. 110–11.
6 For a damning critique of recent French theory, see A. Sokal and J. Bricmont, *Intellectual Impostures*, London: Profile Books, 1998.

Chapter 29

ROLAND BARTHES

INTRODUCTION

The output of the writer and theorist Roland Barthes (1915–80) embraces a variety of styles: anecdotal, journalistic, critical, theoretical. This is appropriate, for Barthes's central, enduring interest is semiotics: showing how all aspects of life and all forms of representation hold meaning in virtue of being implicated within systems of thought and, in particular, how events and objects which pass for 'natural' or 'everyday' in cultural life are in fact constructed in accordance with certain ideological values.

Mythologies (1957) is a good example: a collection of short articles, originally published in the monthly magazine *Les Lettres Nouvelles* from 1954 to 1956, analysing corners of French life. In his reading of striptease, he shows how the practice is 'nationalized' or made acceptable in France through a series of 'layerings' – theatricality, luxury (of the feathers, furs, and gloves), dance, professionalism – all of which 'exorcise' the signified 'sex'.[1] Another study draws attention to the Gothic, cathedralesque qualities of the new Citroën D.S. 19 car: 'conceived with passion by unknown artists, and consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a purely magical object'.[2] The dove-tailing of the car's various sections are as seamless as Christ's robe, and its windows are 'vast walls of air and space'.[3]

'The Death of the Author' is one of the defining texts of poststructuralism. It uses the structuralist theory of language to challenge the modern, classical concept of literature, and writing in general, as being the product of an individual, the author. According to the classical view, a piece of writing is the outcome of the author's creative capacities, and is centred on his life, his passions, his thoughts; to read a text is to recover the ideas which motivated the author. As Barthes puts it, 'the *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end...the voice of a single person, the *author*, "confiding" in us'. This view assumes language is simply a conduit from the mind of the author to the mind of the reader. However, with structuralism, the web-like materiality of language is asserted. Drawing on the texts of Mallarmé, Proust, and (to some degree) Valéry, Barthes presents language as something within which the writer is already immersed, a field of words 'only explainable through other words', to the extent that any notion of a motivating intuition is itself only more words within the structure of language. On this understanding, writing ceases to be the 'recording' of an already-formed content, and becomes a performance, an enunciation, 'a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash'. The 'location' of this space is the reader. With the death of the author as the origin of meaning, the reader emerges as the network of traces through which the written text is constituted.

Notes

1 R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. A. Lavers, London: Jonathan Cape, 1974, p. 87.
2 Ibid., p. 88.
3 Ibid., p. 89.

■ ■ ■

THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR

ROLAND BARTHES

In his story *Sarrasine* Balzac, describing a castrato disguised as a woman, writes the following sentence: '*This was woman herself, with her sudden fears, her irrational whims, her instinctive worries, her impetuous boldness, her fussings, and her delicious sensibility*.' Who is speaking thus? Is it the hero of the story bent on remaining ignorant of the castrato hidden beneath the woman? Is it Balzac the individual, furnished by his personal experience with a philosophy of Woman? Is it Balzac the author professing 'literary' ideas on femininity? Is it universal wisdom? Romantic psychology? We shall never know, for the good reason that writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing.

No doubt it has always been that way. As soon as a fact is *narrated* no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins. The sense of this phenomenon, however, has varied; in ethnographic societies the responsibility for a narrative is never assumed by a person but by a mediator, shaman or relator whose 'performance' – the mastery of the narrative code – may possibly be admired but never his 'genius'. The author is a modern figure, a product of our society insofar as, emerging from the Middle Ages with English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of the individual, of, as it is more nobly put, the 'human person'. It is thus logical that in literature it should be this positivism, the epitome and culmination of capitalist ideology, which has attached the greatest importance to the 'person' of the author. The *author* still reigns in histories of literature, biographies of writers, interviews, magazines, as in the very consciousness of men of letters anxious to unite their person and their work through diaries and memoirs. The image of literature to be found in ordinary culture is tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions, while criticism still consists for the most part in saying that Baudelaire's work is the failure of Baudelaire the man, Van Gogh's his madness, Tchaikovsky's his vice. The *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the *author* 'confiding' in us.

Though the sway of the Author remains powerful (the new criticism has often done no more than consolidate it), it goes without saying that certain writers have long since attempted to loosen it. In France, Mallarmé was doubtless the first to see and to foresee in its full extent the necessity to substitute language itself for the person who until then had been supposed to be its

owner. For him, for us too, it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is, through a prerequisite impersonality (not at all to be confused with the castrating objectivity of the realist novelist), to reach that point where only language acts, 'performs', and not 'me'. Mallarmé's entire poetics consists in suppressing the author in the interests of writing (which is, as will be seen, to restore the place of the reader). Valéry, encumbered by a psychology of the Ego, considerably diluted Mallarmé's theory but, his taste for classicism leading him to turn to the lessons of rhetoric, he never stopped calling into question and deriding the Author; he stressed the linguistic and, as it were, 'hazardous' nature of his activity, and throughout his prose works he militated in favour of the essentially verbal condition of literature; in the face of which all recourse to the writer's inferiority seemed to him pure superstition. Proust himself, despite the apparently psychological character of what are called his *analyses*, was visibly concerned with the task of inexorably blurring, by an extreme subtilization, the relation between the writer and his characters; by making of the narrator not he who has seen and felt nor even he who is writing, but he who *is going to write* (the young man in the novel – but, in fact, how old is he and who is he? – wants to write but cannot; the novel ends when writing at last becomes possible), Proust gave modern writing its epic. By a radical reversal, instead of putting his life into his novel, as is so often maintained, he made of his very life a work for which his own book was the model; so that it is clear to us that Charlus does not imitate Montesquiou but that Montesquiou – in his anecdotal, historical reality – is no more than a secondary fragment, derived from Charlus. Lastly, to go no further than this prehistory of modernity, Surrealism, though unable to accord language a supreme place (language being system and the aim of the movement being, romantically, a direct subversion of codes – itself moreover illusory: a code cannot be destroyed, only 'played off'), contributed to the desacrilization of the image of the Author by ceaselessly recommending the abrupt disappointment of expectations of meaning (the famous surrealist 'jolt'), by entrusting the hand with the task of writing as quickly as possible what the head itself is unaware of (automatic writing), by accepting the principle and the experience of several people writing together. Leaving aside literature itself (such distinctions really becoming invalid), linguistics has recently provided the destruction of the Author with a valuable analytical tool by showing that the whole of the enunciation is an empty process, functioning perfectly without there being any need for it to be filled with the person of the interlocutors. Linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing, just as *I* is nothing other than the instance saying *I*: language knows a 'subject', not a 'person', and this subject, empty outside of the very enunciation which defines it, suffices to make language 'hold together', suffices, that is to say, to exhaust it.

The removal of the Author (one could talk here with Brecht of a veritable 'distancing', the Author diminishing like a figurine at the far end of the literary stage) is not merely an historical fact or an act of writing; it utterly transforms the modern text (or – which is the same thing – the text is henceforth made and read in such a way that at all its levels the author is absent). The temporality is different. The Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a *before* and an *after*. The Author is thought to *nourish* the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child. In complete contrast, the modern scriptor is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written *here and now*. The fact is (or, it follows) that *writing* can no longer designate an operation of recording, notation; representation, 'depiction' (as the Classics would say); rather, it designates exactly what linguists, referring to Oxford philosophy, call a performative, a rare verbal form (exclusively given in the first person and in the present tense) in which the enunciation has no other content (contains no other proposition)

than the act by which it is uttered – something like the *I declare* of kings or the *I sing* of very ancient poets. Having buried the Author, the modern scriptor can thus no longer believe, as according to the pathetic view of his predecessors, that this hand is too slow for his thought or passion and that consequently, making a law of necessity, he must emphasize this delay and indefinitely 'polish' his form. For him, on the contrary, the hand, cut off from any voice, borne by a pure gesture of inscription (and not of expression), traces a field without origin – or which, at least, has no other origin than language itself, language which ceaselessly calls into question all origins.

We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. Similar to Bouvard and Pécuchet, those eternal copyists, at once sublime and comic and whose profound ridiculousness indicates precisely the truth of writing, the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. Did he wish to *express himself*, he ought at least to know that the inner 'thing' he thinks to 'translate' is itself only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely; something experienced in exemplary fashion by the young Thomas de Quincey, he who was so good at Greek that in order to translate absolutely modern ideas and images into that dead language, he had, so Baudelaire tells us (in *Paradis Artificiels*), 'created for himself an unfailing dictionary, vastly more extensive and complex than those resulting from the ordinary patience of purely, literary themes'. Succeeding the Author, the scriptor no longer bears within him passions, humours, feelings, impressions, but rather this immense dictionary from which he draws a writing that can know no halt: life never does more than imitate the book, and the book itself is only a tissue of signs, an imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred.

Once the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing. Such a conception suits criticism very well, the latter then allotting itself the important task of discovering the Author (or its hypostases: society, history, psyche, liberty) beneath the work: when the Author has been found, the text is 'explained' – victory to the critic. Hence there is no surprise in the fact that, historically, the reign of the Author has also been that of the Critic, nor again in the fact that criticism (be it new) is today undermined along with the Author. In the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be *disentangled*, nothing *deciphered*; the structure can be followed, 'run' (like the thread of a stocking) at every point and at every level, but there is nothing beneath: the space of writing is to be ranged over, not pierced; writing ceaselessly posits meaning ceaselessly to evaporate it, carrying out a systematic exemption of meaning. In precisely this way literature (it would be better from now on to say *writing*), by refusing to assign a 'secret', an ultimate meaning, to the text (and to the world as text), liberates what may be called an anti-theological activity, an activity that is truly revolutionary since to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases – reason, science, law.

Let us come back to the Balzac sentence. No one, no 'person', says it: its source, its voice, is not the true place of the writing, which is reading. Another – very precise – example will help to make this clear: recent research (J.-P. Vernant[1]) has demonstrated the constitutively ambiguous nature of Greek tragedy, its texts being woven from words with double meanings that each character understands unilaterally (this perpetual misunderstanding is exactly the 'tragic'); there is, however, someone who understands each word in its duplicity and who, in

addition, hears the very deafness of the characters speaking in front of him – this someone being precisely the reader (or here, the listener). Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that *someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted. Which is why it is derisory to condemn the new writing in the name of a humanism hypocritically turned champion of the reader's rights. Classic criticism has never paid any attention to the reader; for it, the writer is the only person in literature. We are now beginning to let ourselves be fooled no longer by the arrogant antiphrastical recriminations of good society in favour of the very thing it sets aside, ignores, smothers, or destroys; we know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.

Translated by Stephen Heath

Note

1 [Cf. Jean-Pierre Vernant (with Pierre Vidal-Naquet), *Mythe et tragédie en Grèce ancienne*, Paris, 1972, esp. pp. 19–40, 99–131.]

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Roland Barthes in English

Writing Degree Zero (1953), trans. A. Lavers and C. Smith, New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.
Michelet (1954), trans. R. Howard, New York: Hill and Wang, 1986.
Mythologies (1957), trans. A. Lavers, St. Albans: Paladin, 1973.
On Racine (1963), trans. R. Howard, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
Critical Essays (1964), trans. R. Howard, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972.
The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies (1964), trans. R. Howard, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
Elements of Semiology (1964), trans. A. Lavers and C. Smith, New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.
Criticism and Truth (1966), ed. K. Pilcher Keuneman, London: Continuum, 2007.
The Fashion System (1967), trans. M. Ward and R. Howard, New York: Hill and Wang, 1983.
S/Z (1970), trans. R. Miller, New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.
The Empire of the Sign (1970), trans. R. Howard, New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.
Sade, Fourier, Loyola (1971), trans. R. Miller, New York: Hill and Wang, 1976.
New Critical Essays (1972), trans. R. Howard, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009.
The Pleasure of the Text (1973), trans. R. Miller, New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.
Roland Barthes (1975), Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
A Lover's Discourse: Fragments (1977), trans. R. Howard, New York: Hill and Wang, 1984.
Image, Music, Text, trans. S. Heath, London: Fontana, 1977.
Sollers Writer (1979), trans. P. Thody, London: Continuum, 2001.
Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography (1980), trans. R. Howard, London: Vintage, 1993.
The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962–1980 (1981), trans. L. Coverdale, New York: Hill and Wang, 1985.
The Semiotic Challenge (1985), trans. R. Howard, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
The Rustle of Language (1986), trans. R. Howard, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.
The Responsibility of Forms, trans. R. Howard, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

The Neutral: Lecture Course at the Collège de France 1977–1978 (2002), trans. R. Krauss and D. Hollier, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
A Barthes Reader, ed. S. Sontag, New York: Hill and Wang, 1983.
Selected Writings of Roland Barthes, ed. S. Sontag, London: Vintage, 1993.

Further reading

Introductions to Barthes are given by Allen (2003), Culler (2002), and Novitz (2001). For studies of his work on photography and visual culture, see Batchen (2009), Hollander (2002), Huckle (1985), Jacquette (1982), Rabaté (1997), and Shawcross (1996).

Appraisals of his theories of writing and the author are provided by Brown (1992), Burke (2008), Pagan (2000), Stopford (1990), and Walker (1990), with Culler's (2008) essay examining the revisions Barthes made to some of his key ideas shortly before his death.

For an account of his musical semiology, see Szekely (2006). Barthes's structuralism in cultural and political contexts is considered by De Pourcq (2008), Saint-Amand (1996), Scheie (2006), and Tager (1986). Gane and Gane (2003) offer a collection of critical essays on all aspects of Barthes's thought.

G. Allen, *Roland Barthes*, London: Routledge, 2003.
G. Batchen (ed.), *Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Roland Barthes's Camera Lucida*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009.
A. Brown, *Roland Barthes: The Figures of Writing*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
S. Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida*, 3rd edn, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
J. Culler, *Barthes: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
———, 'Preparing the novel: spiralling back', *Paragraph*, 2008, vol. 31, pp. 109–20.
M. De Pourcq, '"The *paideia* of the Greeks": on the methodology of Roland Barthes's *Comment Vivre Ensemble*', *Paragraph*, 2008, vol. 31, pp. 23–37.
M. Gane and N. Gane (eds), *Roland Barthes*, vols. I–III, London: Sage, 2003.
D. Hollander, 'Puncturing genres: Barthes and Derrida on the limits of representation', in W.S. Wurzer (ed.), *Panorama: Philosophies of the Visible*, London: Continuum, 2002, pp. 34–42.
N. Huckle, 'On representation and essence: Barthes and Heidegger', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1985, vol. 34, pp. 275–80.
D. Jacquette, 'Roland Barthes on the aesthetics of photography', *Journal of the Theory and Criticism of the Visual Arts*, 1982, vol. 1, pp. 17–34.
D. Novitz, 'Postmodernism: Barthes and Derrida', in B. Gaut (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, London: Routledge, 2001, pp. 213–24.
N.O. Pagan, 'Roland Barthes and the syllogism of literary criticism', *Mosaic*, 2000, vol. 33, pp. 95–111.
J.-M. Rabaté (ed.), *Writing the Image After Roland Barthes*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.
P. Saint-Amand, 'The secretive body: Roland Barthes's gay erotics', trans. C.A. Porter and N. Guynn, *Yale French Studies*, 1996, vol. 90, pp. 153–71.
T. Scheie, *Performance Degree Zero: Roland Barthes and Theatre*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.
N.M. Shawcross, *Roland Barthes on Photography: The Critical Tradition in Perspective*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996.
J. Stopford, 'The death of the author (as producer)', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 1990, vol. 23, pp. 184–91.
M.D. Szekely, 'Gesture, pulsion, grain: Barthes's musical semiology', *Contemporary Aesthetics*, 2006, vol. 4, pp. 1–12.
M. Tager, 'Myths and politics in the works of Sorel and Barthes', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1986, vol. 47, pp. 625–39.
C. Walker, 'Feminist literary criticism and the author', *Critical Inquiry*, 1990, vol. 16, pp. 551–71.

Chapter 30

MICHEL FOUCAULT

INTRODUCTION

The philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–84) examines the modes of organization at work in historical practices and institutions in order to show how knowledge and belief systems are constructed. He pays particular attention to aspects of social life which are 'normally' marginalized or suppressed, e.g. sexuality, criminality, madness, for they can be read in terms of the historical and ideological currents in thought which have located them as marginal. In *The Order of Things*, one of Foucault's early texts (from 1966), he concentrates on the meta-historical problem of cultural ordering and raises the possibility of seeing ordering itself in operation. Just how and why the organization of particulars should be an issue Foucault illustrates with Borges's 'certain Chinese encyclopaedia'. Here, animals are divided into 'natural' kinds such as: 'belonging to the Emperor', 'embalmed', 'tame', 'fabulous', 'drawn with a very fine camelhair brush', 'having just broken the water pitcher', and 'that from a long way off look like flies'.[1] The example makes the point that conceptual divisions are contingent rather than necessary; schemes of categorization other than our own, no matter how ludicrous, are available.

The organization of thought becomes visible, Foucault maintains, through the tension or 'middle ground' which exists between competing *epistemes* or belief systems, e.g. between, on the one hand, the codes and understandings which make us feel at home in a culture – 'its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values' – and, on the other, scientific theories explaining why the world is ordered.[2] This tensional middle ground reveals the 'propinquity of things' in the absence of any particular order, and thereby 'liberates order itself':[3]

> It is here that [order] appears, according to the culture and the age in question, continuous and graduated or discontinuous and piecemeal, linked to space or constituted anew at each instant by the driving force of time, related to a series of variables or defined by separate systems of coherences, composed of resemblances which are either successive or corresponding, organized around increasing difficulties, etc. This middle region, then, in so far as it makes manifest the modes of being of order, can be posited as the most fundamental of all: anterior to words, perceptions, and gestures, which are then taken to be more or less exact, more or less happy, expressions of it (which is why this experience of order in its pure primary state always plays a critical role).[4]

The ordering principle that interests Foucault in 'What Is an Author?' is the 'author function'. The 'death of the author' thesis in poststructuralism, set out by Barthes in the previous essay, challenges the modern notion of the author as the origin of meaning in a text. While the thesis has been widely acknowledged in recent criticism and philosophy, Foucault maintains that its

implications (such as the decline in importance of concepts of expression and individuality in the reception of texts) have yet to be fully felt. To understand this persistence, he analyses the 'author function', that 'mode of being of discourse' characterized by the appearance of an author's name on a text in relation to literature and in relation to 'transdiscursive' objects, such as theories, traditions, and disciplines (for these too can have authors).

The concept of 'discourse' is crucial for Foucault's study. As Jaworski and Coupland observe, the term has many meanings, such as (quoting Stubbs) 'language above the sentence or above the clause', (quoting Fasold) 'the study of *any* aspect of language use', and (from Fairclough) 'discourse *constitutes* the social' in its three dimensions of 'knowledge, social relations, and social identity'.[5] For Foucault, discourse is tied to questions of power and propriety. For example, he asserts that there was 'a political, economic, and technical incitement to talk about sex' at the beginning of the eighteenth century on the part of the agencies of power, such as administrations associated with labour capacity, medicine, and population, so that what was formerly awkward or a taboo could become ordered and rationalized in the interests of those agencies.[6] In 'What Is an Author?', Foucault considers literary discourse. In modern Western cultures, he declares, literary discourse is understood as a product, a kind of goods within a system of ownership, such as author's rights and author–publisher relations. However, it was originally an act, a gesture 'placed in the bipolar field of the sacred and the profane, the licit and the illicit, the religious and the blasphemous'. Because of the modern positioning of discourse within a system of ownership, its still-active bipolar field, Foucault suggests, assigns the act of writing the possibility of transgression between domains that ownership might otherwise deny. The implication is that the author function is a form of ownership working against other, more transgressive forms of reading.

The intricate nature of Foucault's essay is an index of the difficulty he faces in trying to situate the author function at the level of a literary text and as a series of transdiscursive objects. With the former, he acknowledges that the modern ascription of an author to literary texts is not the straightforward linking of a text to an individual but a construction, a series of connections, traits, continuities, and exclusions we make in the interests of creating 'a certain being of reason that we call "author"'. With the creation of transdiscursive objects, something other than the author's discourse is produced. For example, Freud, as a 'founder of discursivity', makes possible not only a certain number of concepts and analogies but also 'a certain number of differences' in as much as his concepts and analogies open themselves up 'to a certain number of possible applications'. Given this propensity for extension and transformation, the desire for a 'return to the origin' becomes understandable.

Notes

1 M. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. xv.
2 Ibid., p. xx.
3 Ibid., pp. xxiv; xxi.
4 Ibid., p. xxi.
5 A. Jaworski and N. Coupland, 'Introduction', in A. Jaworski and N. Coupland (eds), *The Discourse Reader*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, pp. 1–2; original emphases.
6 M. Foucault, 'The incitement to discourse', in A. Jaworski and N. Coupland (eds), *The Discourse Reader*, p. 493. Reproduced from *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1, An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley, London: Allen Lane, 1979.

■ ■ ■

WHAT IS AN AUTHOR?[1]

MICHEL FOUCAULT

The coming into being of the notion of 'author' constitutes the privileged moment of individualization in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences. Even today, when we reconstruct the history of a concept, literary genre, or school of philosophy, such categories seem relatively weak, secondary, and superimposed scansions in comparison with the solid and fundamental unit of the author and the work.

I shall not offer here a sociohistorical analysis of the author's persona. Certainly, it would be worth examining how the author became individualized in a culture like ours, what status he has been given, at what moment studies of authenticity and attribution began, in what kind of system of valorization the author was involved, at what point we began to recount the lives of authors rather than of heroes, and how this fundamental category of 'the-man-and-his-work criticism' began. For the moment, however, I want to deal solely with the relationship between text and author and with the manner in which the text points to this figure that, at least in appearance, is outside it and antecedes it.

Beckett nicely formulates the theme with which I would like to begin: '"What does it matter who is speaking," someone said, "what does it matter who is speaking."' In this indifference appears one of the fundamental ethical principles of contemporary writing [*écriture*]. I say 'ethical' because this indifference is really not a trait characterizing the manner in which one speaks and writes but, rather, a kind of immanent rule, taken up over and over again, never fully applied, not designating writing as something completed, but dominating it as a practice. Since it is too familiar to require a lengthy analysis, this immanent rule can be adequately illustrated here by tracing two of its major themes.

First of all, we can say that today's writing has freed itself from the theme of expression. Referring only to itself, but without being restricted to the confines of its interiority, writing is identified with its own unfolded exteriority. This means that it is an interplay of signs arranged less according to its signified content than according to the very nature of the signifier. Writing unfolds like a game [*jeu*] that invariably goes beyond its own rules and transgresses its limits. In writing, the point is not to manifest or exalt the act of writing, nor is it to pin a subject within language; it is, rather, a question of creating a space into which the writing subject constantly disappears.

The second theme, writing's relationship with death, is even more familiar. This link subverts an old tradition exemplified by the Greek epic, which was intended to perpetuate the immortality of the hero: if he was willing to die young, it was so that his life, consecrated and magnified by death, might pass into immortality; the narrative then redeemed this accepted death. In another way, the motivation, as well as the theme and the pretext of Arabian narratives – such as *The Thousand and One Nights* – was also the eluding of death: one spoke, telling stories into the early morning, in order to forestall death, to postpone the day of reckoning that would silence the narrator. Scheherazade's narrative is an effort, renewed each night, to keep death outside the circle of life.

Our culture has metamorphosed this idea of narrative, or writing, as something designed to ward off death. Writing has become linked to sacrifice, even to the sacrifice of life: it is now a voluntary effacement that does not need to be represented in books, since it is brought about in the writer's very existence. The work, which once had the duty of providing immortality, now possesses the right to kill, to be its author's murderer, as in the cases of Flaubert, Proust, and Kafka. That is not all, however: this relationship between writing and death is also manifested in the effacement of the writing subject's individual characteristics.

Using all the contrivances that he sets up between himself and what he writes, the writing subject cancels out the signs of his particular individuality. As a result, the mark of the writer is reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence; he must assume the role of the dead man in the game of writing.

None of this is recent; criticism and philosophy took note of the disappearance – or death – of the author some time ago. But the consequences of their discovery of it have not been sufficiently examined, nor has its import been accurately measured. A certain number of notions that are intended to replace the privileged position of the author actually seem to preserve that privilege and suppress the real meaning of his disappearance. I shall examine two of these notions, both of great importance today.

The first is the idea of the work [*oeuvre*]. It is a very familiar thesis that the task of criticism is not to bring out the work's relationships with the author, nor to reconstruct through the text a thought or experience, but rather to analyze the work through its structure, its architecture, its intrinsic form, and the play of its internal relationships. At this point, however, a problem arises: What is a work? What is this curious unity which we designate as a work? Of what elements is it composed? Is it not what an author has written? Difficulties appear immediately. If an individual were not an author, could we say that what he wrote, said, left behind in his papers, or what has been collected of his remarks, could be called a 'work'? When Sade was not considered an author, what was the status of his papers? Simply rolls of paper onto which he ceaselessly uncoiled his fantasies during his imprisonment.

Even when an individual has been accepted as an author, we must still ask whether everything that he wrote, said, or left behind is part of his work. The problem is both theoretical and technical. When undertaking the publication of Nietzsche's works, for example, where should one stop? Surely everything must be published, but what is 'everything'? Everything that Nietzsche himself published, certainly. And what about the rough drafts for his works? Obviously. The plans for his aphorisms? Yes. The deleted passages and the notes at the bottom of the page? Yes. What if, within a workbook filled with aphorisms, one finds a reference, the notation of a meeting or of an address, or a laundry list: is it a work, or not? Why not? And so on, ad infinitum. How can one define a work amid the millions of traces left by someone after his death? A theory of the work does not exist, and the empirical task of those who naively undertake the editing of works often suffers in the absence of such a theory.

We could go even further: Does *The Thousand and One Nights* constitute a work? What about Clement of Alexandria's *Miscellanies* or Diogenes Laërtes' *Lives*? A multitude of questions arises with regard to this notion of the work. Consequently, it is not enough to declare that we should do without the writer (the author) and study the work itself. The word *work* and the unity that it designates are probably as problematic as the status of the author's individuality.

Another notion which has hindered us from taking full measure of the author's disappearance, blurring and concealing the moment of this effacement and subtly preserving the author's existence, is the notion of writing [*écriture*]. When rigorously applied, this notion should allow us not only to circumvent references to the author, but also to situate his recent absence. The notion of writing, as currently employed, is concerned with neither the act of writing nor the indication – be it symptom or sign – of a meaning that someone might have wanted to express. We try, with great effort, to imagine the general condition of each text, the condition of both the space in which it is dispersed and the time in which it unfolds.

In current usage, however, the notion of writing seems to transpose the empirical characteristics of the author into a transcendental anonymity. We are content to efface the

more visible marks of the author's empiricity by playing off, one against the other, two ways of characterizing writing, namely, the critical and the religious approaches. Giving writing a primal status seems to be a way of retranslating, in transcendental terms, both the theological affirmation of its sacred character and the critical affirmation of its creative character. To admit that writing is, because of the very history that it made possible, subject to the test of oblivion and repression, seems to represent, in transcendental terms, the religious principle of the hidden meaning (which requires interpretation) and the critical principle of implicit significations, silent determinations, and obscured contents (which give rise to commentary). To imagine writing as absence seems to be a simple repetition, in transcendental terms, of both the religious principle of inalterable and yet never fulfilled tradition, and the aesthetic principle of the work's survival, its perpetuation beyond the author's death, and its enigmatic excess in relation to him.

This usage of the notion of writing runs the risk of maintaining the author's privileges under the protection of the a priori: it keeps alive, in the gray light of neutralization, the interplay of those representations that formed a particular image of the author. The author's disappearance, which, since Mallarmé, has been a constantly recurring event, is subject to a series of transcendental barriers. There seems to be an important dividing line between those who believe that they can still locate today's discontinuities [*ruptures*] in the historico-transcendental tradition of the nineteenth century and those who try to free themselves once and for all from that tradition.

It is not enough, however, to repeat the empty affirmation that the author has disappeared. For the same reason, it is not enough to keep repeating that God and man have died a common death. Instead, we must locate the space left empty by the author's disappearance, follow the distribution of gaps and breaches, and watch for the openings this disappearance uncovers.

First, we need to clarify briefly the problems arising from the use of the author's name. What is an author's name? How does it function? Far from offering a solution, I shall only indicate some of the difficulties that it presents.

The author's name is a proper name, and therefore it raises the problems common to all proper names. (Here I refer to Searle's analyses, among others.[2]) Obviously, one cannot turn a proper name into a pure and simple reference. It has other than indicative functions: more than an indication, a gesture, a finger pointed at someone, it is the equivalent of a description. When one says 'Aristotle,' one employs a word that is the equivalent of one, or a series, of definite descriptions, such as 'the author of the *Analytics*,' 'the founder of ontology,' and so forth. One cannot stop there, however, because a proper name does not have just one signification. When we discover that Arthur Rimbaud did not write *La Chasse spirituelle*, we cannot pretend that the meaning of this proper name, or that of the author, has been altered. The proper name and the author's name are situated between the two poles of description and designation: they must have a certain link with what they name, but one that is neither entirely in the mode of designation nor in that of description; it must be a specific link. However – and it is here that the particular difficulties of the author's name arise – the links between the proper name and the individual named and between the author's name and what it names are not isomorphic and do not function in the same way. There are several differences.

If, for example, Pierre Dupont does not have blue eyes, or was not born in Paris, or is not a doctor, the name Pierre Dupont will still always refer to the same person; such things do not modify the link of designation. The problems raised by the author's name are much more complex, however. If I discover that Shakespeare was not born in the house we visit today, this is a modification that, obviously, will not alter the functioning of the author's name. But if we proved that Shakespeare did not write those sonnets which pass for his, that would constitute a significant change and affect the manner in which the author's name functions. If we proved that Shakespeare

wrote Bacon's *Organon* by showing that the same author wrote both the works of Bacon and those of Shakespeare, that would be a third type of change that would entirely modify the functioning of the author's name. The author's name is not, therefore, just a proper name like the rest.

Many other facts point out the paradoxical singularity of the author's name. To say that Pierre Dupont does not exist is not at all the same as saying that Homer or Hermes Trismegistus did not exist. In the first case, it means that no one has the name Pierre Dupont; in the second, it means that several people were mixed together under one name, or that the true author had none of the traits traditionally ascribed to the personae of Homer or Hermes. To say that X's real name is actually Jacques Durand instead of Pierre Dupont is not the same as saying that Stendhal's name was Henri Beyle. One could also question the meaning and functioning of propositions like 'Bourbaki is so-and-so, so-and-so, and so forth,' and 'Victor Eremita, Climacus, Anticlimacus, Frater Taciturnus, Constantine Constantius, all of these are Kierkegaard.'

These differences may result from the fact that an author's name is not simply an element in a discourse (capable of being either subject or object, of being replaced by a pronoun, and the like); it performs a certain role with regard to narrative discourse, assuring a classificatory function. Such a name permits one to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others. In addition, it establishes a relationship among the texts. Hermes Trismegistus did not exist, nor did Hippocrates – in the sense that Balzac existed – but the fact that several texts have been placed under the same name indicates that there has been established among them a relationship of homogeneity, filiation, authentication of some texts by the use of others, reciprocal explication, or concomitant utilization. The author's name serves to characterize a certain mode of being of discourse: the fact that the discourse has an author's name, that one can say 'this was written by so-and-so' or 'so-and-so is its author,' shows that this discourse is not ordinary everyday speech that merely comes and goes, not something that is immediately consumable. On the contrary, it is a speech that must be received in a certain mode and that, in a given culture, must receive a certain status.

It would seem that the author's name, unlike other proper names, does not pass from the interior of a discourse to the real and exterior individual who produced it; instead, the name seems always to be present, marking off the edges of the text, revealing, or at least characterizing, its mode of being. The author's name manifests the appearance of a certain discursive set and indicates the status of this discourse within a society and a culture. It has no legal status, nor is it located in the fiction of the work; rather, it is located in the break that founds a certain discursive construct and its very particular mode of being. As a result, we could say that in a civilization like our own there are a certain number of discourses endowed with the 'author function' while others are deprived of it. A private letter may well have a signer – it does not have an author; a contract may well have a guarantor – it does not have an author. An anonymous text posted on a wall probably has an editor – but not an author. The author function is therefore characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society.

Let us analyze this 'author function' as we have just described it. In our culture, how does one characterize a discourse containing the author function? In what way is this discourse different from other discourses? If we limit our remarks to the author of a book or a text, we can isolate four different characteristics.

First of all, discourses are objects of appropriation. The form of ownership from which they spring is of a rather particular type, one that has been codified for many years. We should note that, historically, this type of ownership has always been subsequent to what one might call penal appropriation. Texts, books, and discourses really began to have authors (other than mythical, sacralized and sacralizing figures) to the extent that authors became subject to punishment, that

is, to the extent that discourses could be transgressive. In our culture (and doubtless in many others), discourse was not originally a product, a thing, a kind of goods; it was essentially an act – an act placed in the bipolar field of the sacred and the profane, the licit and the illicit, the religious and the blasphemous. Historically, it was a gesture fraught with risks before becoming goods caught up in a circuit of ownership.

Once a system of ownership for texts came into being, once strict rules concerning author's rights, author–publisher relations, rights of reproduction, and related matters were enacted – at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century – the possibility of transgression attached to the act of writing took on, more and more, the form of an imperative peculiar to literature. It is as if the author, beginning with the moment at which he was placed in the system of property that characterizes our society, compensated for the status that he thus acquired by rediscovering the old bipolar field of discourse, systematically practicing transgression and thereby restoring danger to a writing that was now guaranteed the benefits of ownership.

The author function does not affect all discourses in a universal and constant way, however. In our civilization, it has not always been the same types of texts that have required attribution to an author. There was a time when the texts we today call 'literary' (narratives, stories, epics, tragedies, comedies) were accepted, put into circulation, and valorized without any question about the identity of their author; their anonymity caused no difficulties since their ancientness, whether real or imagined, was regarded as a sufficient guarantee of their status. On the other hand, those texts we now would call scientific – those dealing with cosmology and the heavens, medicine and illnesses, natural sciences and geography – were accepted in the Middle Ages, and accepted as 'true,' only when marked with the name of their author. 'Hippocrates said,' 'Pliny recounts,' were not really formulas of an argument based on authority; they were the markers inserted in discourses that were supposed to be received as statements of demonstrated truth.

A switch takes place in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Scientific discourses began to be received for themselves, in the anonymity of an established or always redemonstrable truth; their membership in a systematic ensemble, and not the reference to the individual who produced them, stood as their guarantee. The author function faded away, and the inventor's name served only to christen a theorem, proposition, particular effect, property, body, group of elements, or pathological syndrome. By the same token, literary discourses came to be accepted only when endowed with the author function. We now ask of each poetic or fictional text: From where does it come, who wrote it, when, under what circumstances, or beginning with what design? The meaning ascribed to it and the status or value accorded it depend on the manner in which we answer these questions. And if a text should be discovered in a state of anonymity – whether as a consequence of an accident or the author's explicit wish – the game becomes one of rediscovering the author. Since literary anonymity is not tolerable, we can accept it only in the guise of an enigma. As a result, the author function today plays an important role in our view of literary works. (These are obviously generalizations that would have to be refined insofar as recent critical practice is concerned. Criticism began some time ago to treat works according to their genre and type, following the recurrent elements that are enfigured in them, as proper variations around an invariant that is no longer the individual creator. Even so, if in mathematics reference to the author is barely anything any longer but a manner of naming theorems or sets of propositions, in biology and medicine the indication of the author and the date of his work play a rather different role. It is not simply a manner of indicating the source, but of providing a certain index of 'reality' in relation to the techniques and objects of experience made use of in a particular period and in such-and-such a laboratory.)

The third characteristic of this author function is that it does not develop spontaneously as the attribution of a discourse to an individual. It is, rather, the result of a complex operation that

constructs a certain being of reason that we call 'author.' Critics doubtless try to give this being of reason a realistic status, by discerning, in the individual, a 'deep' motive, a 'creative' power, or a 'design,' the milieu in which writing originates. Nevertheless, these aspects of an individual which we designate as making him an author are only a projection, in more or less psychologizing terms, of the operations we force texts to undergo, the connections we make, the traits we establish as pertinent, the continuities we recognize, or the exclusions we practice. All these operations vary according to periods and types of discourse. We do not construct a 'philosophical author' as we do a 'poet,' just as in the eighteenth century one did not construct a novelist as we do today. Still, we can find through the ages certain constants in the rules of author construction.

It seems, for example, that the manner in which literary criticism once defined the author – or, rather, constructed the figure of the author beginning with existing texts and discourses – is directly derived from the manner in which Christian tradition authenticated (or rejected) the texts at its disposal. In order to 'rediscover' an author in a work, modern criticism uses methods similar to those that Christian exegesis employed when trying to prove the value of a text by its author's saintliness. In *De Viris illustribus*, Saint Jerome explains that homonymy is not sufficient to identify legitimately authors of more than one work: different individuals could have had the same name, or one man could have, illegitimately, borrowed another's patronymic. The name as an individual trademark is not enough when one works within a textual tradition.

How, then, can one attribute several discourses to one and the same author? How can one use the author function to determine if one is dealing with one or several individuals? Saint Jerome proposes four criteria: (1) if among several books attributed to an author one is inferior to the others, it must be withdrawn from the list of the author's works (the author is therefore defined as a constant level of value); (2) the same should be done if certain texts contradict the doctrine expounded in the author's other works (the author is thus defined as a field of conceptual or theoretical coherence); (3) one must also exclude works that are written in a different style, containing words and expressions not ordinarily found in the writer's production (the author is here conceived as a stylistic unity); (4) finally, passages quoting statements made or mentioning events that occurred after the author's death must be regarded as interpolated texts (the author is here seen as a historical figure at the crossroads of a certain number of events).

Modern literary criticism, even when – as is now customary – it is not concerned with questions of authentication, still defines the author in much the same way: the author provides the basis for explaining not only the presence of certain events in a work, but also their transformations, distortions, and diverse modifications (through his biography, the determination of his individual perspective, the analysis of his social position, and the revelation of his basic design). The author is also the principle of a certain unity of writing – all differences having to be resolved, at least in part, by the principles of evolution, maturation, or influence. The author also serves to neutralize the contradictions that may emerge in a series of texts: there must be – at a certain level of his thought or desire, of his consciousness or unconscious – a point where contradictions are resolved, where incompatible elements are at last tied together or organized around a fundamental or originating contradiction. Finally, the author is a particular source of expression that, in more or less completed forms, is manifested equally well, and with similar validity, in works, sketches, letters, fragments, and so on. Clearly, Saint Jerome's four criteria of authenticity (criteria that seem totally insufficient for today's exegetes) do define the four modalities according to which modern criticism brings the author function into play.

But the author function is not a pure and simple reconstruction made secondhand from a text given as inert material. The text always contains a certain number of signs referring to the author. These signs, well known to grammarians, are personal pronouns, adverbs of time and place, and verb conjugation. Such elements do not play the same role in discourses provided

with the author function as in those lacking it. In the latter, such 'shifters' refer to the real speaker and to the spatio-temporal coordinates of his discourse (although certain modifications can occur, as in the operation of relating discourses in the first person). In the former, however, their role is more complex and variable. Everyone knows that, in a novel offered as a narrator's account, neither the first-person pronoun nor the present indicative refers exactly to the writer or to the moment in which he writes but, rather, to an alter ego whose distance from the author varies, often changing in the course of the work. It would be just as wrong to equate the author with the real writer as to equate him with the fictitious speaker; the author function is carried out and operates in the scission itself, in this division and this distance.

One might object that this is a characteristic peculiar to novelistic or poetic discourse, a game in which only 'quasi discourses' participate. In fact, however, all discourses endowed with the author function possess this plurality of self. The self that speaks in the preface to a treatise on mathematics – and that indicates the circumstances of the treatise's composition – is identical neither in its position nor in its functioning to the self that speaks in the course of a demonstration, and that appears in the form of 'I conclude' or 'I suppose.' In the first case, the 'I' refers to an individual without an equivalent who, in a determined place and time, completed a certain task; in the second, the 'I' indicates an instance and a level of demonstration which any individual could perform provided that he accepted the same system of symbols, play of axioms, and set of previous demonstrations. We could also, in the same treatise, locate a third self, one that speaks to tell the work's meaning, the obstacles encountered, the results obtained, and the remaining problems; this self is situated in the field of already existing or yet-to-appear mathematical discourses. The author function is not assumed by the first of these selves at the expense of the other two, which would then be nothing more than a fictitious splitting in two of the first one. On the contrary, in these discourses the author function operates so as to effect the dispersion of these three simultaneous selves.

No doubt, analysis could discover still more characteristic traits of the author function. I will limit myself to these four, however, because they seem both the most visible and the most important. They can be summarized as follows: (1) the author function is linked to the juridical and institutional system that encompasses, determines, and articulates the universe of discourses; (2) it does not affect all discourses in the same way at all times and in all types of civilization; (3) it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a discourse to its producer but, rather, by a series of specific and complex operations; (4) it does not refer purely and simply to a real individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to several selves, to several subjects – positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals.

Up to this point I have unjustifiably limited my subject. Certainly the author function in painting, music, and other arts should have been discussed; but even supposing that we remain within the world of discourse, as I want to do, I seem to have given the term 'author' much too narrow a meaning. I have discussed the author only in the limited sense of a person to whom the production of a text, a book, or a work can be legitimately attributed. It is easy to see that in the sphere of discourse one can be the author of much more than a book – one can be the author of a theory, tradition, or discipline in which other books and authors will in their turn find a place. These authors are in a position that I will call 'transdiscursive.' This is a recurring phenomenon – certainly as old as our civilization. Homer, Aristotle, and the Church Fathers, as well as the first mathematicians and the originators of the Hippocratic tradition, all played this role. Furthermore, in the course of the nineteenth century, there appeared in Europe another, more uncommon, kind of author, whom one should confuse with neither the 'great' literary authors, nor the authors of religious texts, nor the founders of science. In a somewhat arbitrary way we shall call those who belong in this last group 'founders of discursivity.'

They are unique in that they are not just the authors of their own works. They have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts. In this sense they are very different, for example, from a novelist, who is, in fact, nothing more than the author of his own text. Freud is not just the author of *The Interpretation of Dreams* or *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*; Marx is not just the author of the *Communist Manifesto* or *Das Kapital*: they both have established an endless possibility of discourse. Obviously, it is easy to object. One might say that it is not true that the author of a novel is only the author of his own text; in a sense, he also, provided that he acquires some 'importance,' governs and commands more than that. To take a very simple example, one could say that Ann Radcliffe not only wrote *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* and several other novels but also made possible the appearance of the Gothic horror novel at the beginning of the nineteenth century; in that respect, her author function exceeds her own work. But I think there is an answer to this objection. These founders of discursivity (I use Marx and Freud as examples, because I believe them to be both the first and the most important cases) make possible something altogether different from what a novelist makes possible. Ann Radcliffe's texts opened the way for a certain number of resemblances and analogies which have their model or principle in her work. The latter contains characteristic signs, figures, relationships, and structures that could be reused by others. In other words, to say that Ann Radcliffe founded the Gothic horror novel means that in the nineteenth-century Gothic novel one will find, as in Ann Radcliffe's works, the theme of the heroine caught in the trap of her own innocence, the hidden castle, the character of the black, cursed hero devoted to making the world expiate the evil done to him, and all the rest of it. On the other hand, when I speak of Marx or Freud as founders of discursivity, I mean that they made possible not only a certain number of analogies but also (and equally important) a certain number of differences. They have created a possibility for something other than their discourse, yet something belonging to what they founded. To say that Freud founded psychoanalysis does not (simply) mean that we find the concept of the libido or the technique of dream analysis in the works of Karl Abraham or Melanie Klein; it means that Freud made possible a certain number of divergences – with respect to his own texts, concepts, and hypotheses – that all arise from the psychoanalytic discourse itself.

This would seem to present a new difficulty, however, or at least a new problem: is the above not true, after all, of any founder of a science, or of any author who has introduced some transformation into a science that might be called fecund? After all, Galileo made possible not only those discourses which repeated the laws he had formulated, but also statements very different from what he himself had said. If Georges Cuvier is the founder of biology, or Ferdinand de Saussure the founder of linguistics, it is not because they were imitated, nor because people have since taken up again the concept of organism or sign; it is because Cuvier made possible, to a certain extent, a theory of evolution diametrically opposed to his own fixism; it is because Saussure made possible a generative grammar radically different from his structural analyses. Superficially, then, the initiation of discursive practices appears similar to the founding of any scientific endeavor.

Still, there is a difference, and a notable one. In the case of a science, the act that founds it is on an equal footing with its future transformations; this act becomes in some respects part of the set of modifications that it makes possible. Of course, this belonging can take several forms. In the future development of a science, the founding act may appear as little more than a particular instance of a more general phenomenon that unveils itself in the process. It can also turn out to be marred by intuition and empirical bias; one must then reformulate it, making it the object of a certain number of supplementary theoretical operations that establish it more rigorously, and so on. Finally, it can seem to be a hasty generalization that must be retraced. In other words, the founding act of a science can always be reintroduced within the machinery of those transformations which derive from it.

In contrast, the initiation of a discursive practice is heterogeneous to its subsequent transformations. To expand a type of discursivity, such as psychoanalysis as founded by Freud, is not to give it a formal generality it would not have permitted at the outset but, rather, to open it up to a certain number of possible applications. To limit psychoanalysis as a type of discursivity is, in reality, to try to isolate in the founding act an eventually restricted number of propositions or statements to which, alone, one grants a founding value, and in relation to which certain concepts or theories accepted by Freud might be considered as derived, secondary, and accessory. In addition, one does not declare certain propositions in the work of these founders to be false: instead, when trying to seize the act of founding, one sets aside those statements that are not pertinent, either because they are deemed inessential, or because they are considered 'prehistoric' and derived from another type of discursivity. In other words, unlike the founding of a science, the initiation of a discursive practice does not participate in its later transformations. As a result, one defines a proposition's theoretical validity in relation to the work of the founders – while, in the case of Galileo and Newton, it is in relation to what physics or cosmology is in its intrinsic structure and normativity that one affirms the validity of any proposition those men may have put forth. To phrase it very schematically: the work of initiators of discursivity is not situated in the space that science defines; rather, it is the science or the discursivity which refers back to their work as primary coordinates.

In this way we can understand the inevitable necessity, within these fields of discursivity, for a 'return to the origin.' This return, which is part of the discursive field itself, never stops modifying it. The return is not a historical supplement that would be added to the discursivity, or merely an ornament; on the contrary, it constitutes an effective and necessary task of transforming the discursive practice itself. Reexamination of Galileo's text may well change our understanding of the history of mechanics, but it will never be able to change mechanics itself. On the other hand, reexamining Freud's texts modifies psychoanalysis itself, just as a reexamination of Marx's would modify Marxism.

What I have just outlined regarding these 'discursive instaurations' is, of course, very schematic; this is true, in particular, of the opposition I have tried to draw between discursive initiation and scientific founding. It is not always easy to distinguish between the two; moreover, nothing proves that they are two mutually exclusive procedures. I have attempted the distinction for only one reason: to show that the author function, which is complex enough when one tries to situate it at the level of a book or a series of texts that carry a given signature, involves still more determining factors when one tries to analyze it in larger units, such as groups of works or entire disciplines.

To conclude, I would like to review the reasons why I attach a certain importance to what I have said.

On the one hand, an analysis in the direction that I have outlined might provide for an approach to a typology of discourse. It seems to me, at least at first glance, that such a typology cannot be constructed solely from the grammatical features, formal structures, and objects of discourse: more likely, there exist properties or relationships peculiar to discourse (not reducible to the rules of grammar and logic), and one must use these to distinguish the major categories of discourse. The relationship (or nonrelationship) with an author, and the different forms this relationship takes, constitute – in a quite visible manner – one of these discursive properties.

On the other hand, I believe that one could find here an introduction to the historical analysis of discourse. Perhaps it is time to study discourses not only in terms of their expressive value or formal transformations but according to their modes of existence. The modes of circulation, valorization, attribution, and appropriation of discourses vary with each culture and are modified within each. The manner in which they are articulated according to social relationships can be

more readily understood, I believe, in the activity of the author function and in its modifications than in the themes or concepts that discourses set in motion.

It would seem that one could also, beginning with analyses of this type, reexamine the privileges of the subject. I realize that in undertaking the internal and architectonic analysis of a work (be it a literary text, philosophical system, or scientific work), in setting aside biographical and psychological references, one has already called back into question the absolute character and founding role of the subject. Still, perhaps one must return to this question, not in order to reestablish the theme of an originating subject but to grasp the subject's points of insertion, modes of functioning, and system of dependencies. Doing so means overturning the traditional problem, no longer raising the questions: How can a free subject penetrate the density of things and give it meaning? How can it activate the rules of a language from within and thus give rise to the designs that are properly its own? Instead, these questions will be raised: How, under what conditions, and in what forms can something like a subject appear in the order of discourse? What place can it occupy in each type of discourse, what functions can it assume, and by obeying what rules? In short, it is a matter of depriving the subject (or its substitute) of its role as originator, and of analyzing the subject as a variable and complex function of discourse.

Second, there are reasons dealing with the 'ideological' status of the author. The question then becomes: How can one reduce the great peril, the great danger with which fiction threatens our world? The answer is: One can reduce it with the author. The author allows a limitation of the cancerous and dangerous proliferation of significations within a world where one is thrifty not only with one's resources and riches but also with one's discourses and their significations. The author is the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning. As a result, we must entirely reverse the traditional idea of the author. We are accustomed, as we have seen earlier, to saying that the author is the genial creator of a work in which he deposits, with infinite wealth and generosity, an inexhaustible world of significations. We are used to thinking that the author is so different from all other men, and so transcendent with regard to all languages that, as soon as he speaks, meaning begins to proliferate, to proliferate indefinitely.

The truth is quite the contrary: the author is not an indefinite source of significations that fill a work; the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction. In fact, if we are accustomed to presenting the author as a genius, as a perpetual surging of invention, it is because, in reality, we make him function in exactly the opposite fashion. One can say that the author is an ideological product, since we represent him as the opposite of his historically real function. When a historically given function is represented in a figure that inverts it, one has an ideological production. The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning.

In saying this, I seem to call for a form of culture in which fiction would not be limited by the figure of the author. It would be pure romanticism, however, to imagine a culture in which the fictive would operate in an absolutely free state, in which fiction would be put at the disposal of everyone and would develop without passing through something like a necessary or constraining figure. Although, since the eighteenth century, the author has played the role of the regulator of the fictive, a role quite characteristic of our era of industrial and bourgeois society, of individualism and private property, still, given the historical modifications that are taking place, it does not seem necessary that the author function remain constant in form, complexity, and even in existence. I think that, as our society changes, at the very moment when it is in the process of changing, the author function will disappear, and in such a manner that fiction and its polysemous texts will once again function according to another mode, but still with a system of

constraint – one that will no longer be the author but will have to be determined or, perhaps, experienced [*expérimenter*].

All discourses, whatever their status, form, value, and whatever the treatment to which they will be subjected, would then develop in the anonymity of a murmur. We would no longer hear the questions that have been rehashed for so long: Who really spoke? Is it really he and not someone else? With what authenticity or originality? And what part of his deepest self did he express in his discourse? Instead, there would be other questions, like these: What are the modes of existence of this discourse? Where has it been used, how can it circulate, and who can appropriate it for himself? What are the places in it where there is room for possible subjects? Who can assume these various subject functions? And behind all these questions, we would hear hardly anything but the stirring of an indifference: What difference does it make who is speaking?

Translated by Josué V. Harari

Notes

1 This essay is the text of a lecture presented to the Société Française de philosophie on 22 February 1969 (Foucault gave a modified form of the lecture in the United States in 1970). This translation, by Josué V. Harari, has been slightly modified.

2 John Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1969, pp. 162–74. – Editor [J.D. Faubion].

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Michel Foucault in English

Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason (1961), trans. R. Howard, New York: Vintage, 1973.

A History of Madness (1961), ed. J. Khalfa, trans. J. Murphy and J. Khalfa, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.

The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception (1963), trans. A. Sheridan, New York: Vintage, 1975.

The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences (1966), New York: Vintage, 1973.

Foucault/Blanchot: Maurice Blanchot: The Thought From Outside; Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him (with M. Blanchot; 1966), New York: Zone Books, 1987.

An Archaeology of Knowledge (1969), trans. A. Sheridan, London: Tavistock, 1974.

Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (1975), trans. A. Sheridan, London: Penguin, 1977.

The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction (1976), trans. R. Hurley, London: Allen Lane, 1979.

The History of Sexuality, Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure (1984), trans. R. Hurley, New York: Pantheon, 1985.

The History of Sexuality, Volume 3: The Care of the Self (1984), trans. R. Hurley, New York: Pantheon, 1986.

Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–77, ed. C. Gordon, New York: Pantheon, 1980.

The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality, ed. G. Burchill, C. Gordon, and P. Miller, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

'Society Must be Defended': Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–76 (1997), eds M. Bertani and A. Fontana, trans. D. Macey, New York: Picador, 2003.

Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–76 (1999), eds V. Marchetti and A. Salomoni, trans. G. Burchill, New York: Picador, 2003.

Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981–82 (2001), ed. F. Gros, trans. G. Burchill, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France 1973–74 (2003), ed. J. Lagrange, trans. G. Burchill, New York: Picador, 2006.

Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–78 (2004), ed. M. Senellart, trans. G. Burchill, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978–79 (2004), ed. M. Senellart, trans. G. Burchill, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
The Politics of Truth, 2nd edn, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007.
The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France 1982–83 (2008), ed. F. Gros, trans. G. Burchill, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
The Foucault Reader, ed. Paul Rabinow, New York: Pantheon, 1984.
Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984, Volume 1: Ethics, ed. P. Rabinow, New York: New Press, 1997.
Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984, Volume 2: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology, ed. J.D. Faubion, New York: New Press, 1998.
Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984, Volume 3: Power, ed. J.D. Faubion, New York: New Press, 2000.

Further reading

Introductions to Foucault's thought are provided by Downing (2008), Gutting (2008), Mills (2003), and Wicks (2001). Two notable critiques of Foucault are given by Baudrillard (2007) and Deleuze (1998), and there is also Gutting's (2005) collection of critical essays on a range of Foucauldian themes. Studies of Foucault's concept of the author are offered by Burke (2008), Calcagno (2009), Hendricks (2002), and Wilson (2004). Bennett (1996), Besley and Peters (2007), Huijer (1999), O'Leary (1996), and Simons (1991) explore the constellation of ethics, politics, and subjectivity, while Berchman (2002), Garlick (2002), and Seppa (2004) examine his concept of the human subject as a work of art.

Foucault's writing on visual art is assessed by Shapiro (1993), Soussloff (2009), Tanke (2009), and Watson (1984). The importance of Nietzsche for Foucault is considered by Cutrofello (2005), and the implications of his thought for feminist philosophy are examined by Oksala (2004), and Taylor and Vingtes (2004). May (2005) and Shusterman (2000) focus on Foucault's account of the body. Other themes within his aesthetics are considered by Carroll (1987), Carvalho (1993), Knips (2008), O'Leary (2008), Shapiro (1993), Wimberly (2009), and Ziarek (1998).

J. Baudrillard, *Forget Foucault*, 2nd edn, trans. N. Dufresne, New York: Semiotext(e), 2007.
J. Bennett, '"How is it, then, that we still remain barbarians?" Foucault, Schiller, and the aestheticization of ethics', *Political Theory*, 1996, vol. 24, pp. 653–72.
R.M. Berchman, 'Aesthetics as a philosophic ethos: Plotinus and Foucault', in R.B. Harris (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought, Part Two*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002, pp. 181–216.
T.A.C. Besley and M.A. Peters (eds), *Subjectivity and Truth: Foucault, Education, and the Culture of Self*, New York: Peter Lang, 2007.
S. Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida*, 3rd edn, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
A. Calcagno, 'Foucault and Derrida: the question of empowering and disempowering the author', *Human Studies*, 2009, vol. 32, pp. 33–51.
D. Carroll, *Paraesthetics: Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida*, New York: Methuen, 1987.
J.M. Carvalho, 'The visible and the invisible in Merleau-Ponty and Foucault', *International Studies in Philosophy*, 1993, vol. 25, pp. 35–46.
A. Cutrofello, 'Foucault on tragedy', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 2005, vol. 31, pp. 573–84.
G. Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. S. Hand, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
L. Downing, *The Cambridge Introduction to Michel Foucault*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
S. Garlick, 'The beauty of friendship: Foucault, masculinity and the work of art', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 2002, vol. 28, pp. 558–77.
G. Gutting (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
———, 'Michel Foucault', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2008. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/foucault/ (accessed 25 May 2010).
C. Hendricks, 'The author's remains: Foucault and the demise of the "author-function"', *Philosophy Today*, 2002, vol. 46, pp. 152–69.
M. Huijer, 'The aesthetics of existence in the work of Michel Foucault', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 1999, vol. 25, pp. 61–85.
I. Knips, '*Las Meninas*: ambiguity between perception and concept: Merleau-Ponty and Foucault', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 2008, vol. 15, pp. 58–63.

T. May, 'To change the world, to celebrate life: Merleau-Ponty and Foucault on the body', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 2005, vol. 31, pp. 517–31.
S. Mills, *Michel Foucault*, London: Routledge, 2003.
T. O'Leary, 'Foucault, politics and the autonomy of the aesthetic', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 1996, vol. 4, pp. 273–91.
———, 'Foucault's turn from literature', *Continental Philosophy Review*, 2008, vol. 41, pp. 89–110.
J. Oksala, 'Anarchic bodies: Foucault and the feminist question of experience', *Hypatia*, 2004, vol. 19, pp. 99–121.
A. Seppa, 'Foucault, enlightenment and the aesthetics of the self', *Contemporary Aesthetics*, 2004, vol. 2, pp. 1–23.
G. Shapiro, 'Art and its doubles: Danto, Foucault, and their simulacra', in M. Rollins (ed.), *Danto and his Critics*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1993, pp. 129–41.
R. Shusterman, 'Somaesthetics and care of the self: the case of Foucault', *Monist*, 2000, vol. 83, pp. 530–51.
J. Simons, 'From resistance to polaesthetics: politics after Foucault', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 1991, vol. 18, pp. 41–55.
C.M. Soussloff, 'Michel Foucault and the point of painting', *Art History*, 2009, vol. 32, pp. 734–54.
J.J. Tanke, *Foucault's Philosophy of Art: A Genealogy of Modernity*, London: Continuum, 2009.
D. Taylor and K. Vingtes (eds), *Feminism and the Final Foucault*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004.
S. Watson, 'Merleau-Ponty and Foucault: de-aestheticization of the work of art', *Philosophy Today*, 1984, vol. 28, pp. 148–67.
R. Wicks, 'Foucault', in B. Gaut and D. Lopes (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, London and New York: Routledge, 2001, pp. 199–212.
A. Wilson, 'Foucault on the "question of the author": a critical exegesis', *The Modern Language Review*, 2004, vol. 99, pp. 339–63.
C. Wimberly, 'The joy of difference: Foucault and Hadot on the aesthetic and the universal in philosophy', *Philosophy Today*, 2009, vol. 53, pp. 191–202.
K. Ziarek, 'Powers to be: art and technology in Heidegger and Foucault', *Research in Phenomenology*, 1998, vol. 28, pp. 162–94.

Chapter 31

JACQUES DERRIDA

INTRODUCTION

Deconstruction is one of the most prominent and distinctive strategies of critique within poststructuralism. It is a form of textual analysis which grew out of the work of literary theorists based at (or affiliated with) Yale University in Connecticut in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The five principal figures were Harold Bloom, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), Geoffrey Hartman, and J. Hillis Miller, collectively known as the Yale School of Literary Criticism, and, of these, Derrida and de Man have become the most talked about.

Given the structuralist thesis that language is a web of autonomous, differential relationships, it follows that any piece of writing will inadvertently generate echoes and associations other than the ones planned or acknowledged by the author. Orthodox literary criticism in Britain and America before and after the Second World War was the 'New Criticism'. Structuralist in essence, it regarded texts as works which could be interpreted purely on their own terms, looking only at the words on the page, and not as historical artefacts or reflections on events or insights into the life of the writer. Deconstruction continues the New Critical practice of close reading but shifts attention to the way in which metaphors, turns of phrase, and distinctions adopted by the author can turn around and thwart her intention. Metaphors are targeted because they admit unanticipated significations into the text. Nietzsche's influence is evident here. Recall 'On Truth and Lie in an Extramoral Sense' in which he argues for the fundamental metaphoricity of all concepts.

Special significance is attached to binary oppositions in language, such as inner–outer, speech–writing, mental–physical, literal–metaphorical, etc. On the one hand, these enable the formation of value judgments by allowing one term to be elevated at the expense of its opposite but, on the other, as deconstructive readings show, the author's forthright, univocal assertion is often undermined when the underplayed term inadvertently reasserts itself. For example, in 'White Mythology', Derrida's study of how philosophy tries to come to terms with the role of metaphor in its own discourse, metaphor is shown to be articulated through a series of binary oppositions, such as fresh–worn, life–death, and home–away.[1] There is the ambition within philosophy to have immediate, prelinguistic contact with Being, reality as it is in itself, without the interruptions of metaphorical language. Even the first word in each of the oppositions above holds out the hope of such an original, vital, or essential meaning being possible ('fresh', 'life', and 'home'). But Derrida shows that any attempt 'to get on top of metaphor', to try to reach the original meaning behind metaphors and without metaphors, only introduces the other terms: 'wear', 'death', and the transposition or carriage away to another meaning or term. Another example of deconstruction's inversion of binary oppositions is de Man's essay 'Reading (Proust)', in which he deconstructs Proust's attempts to establish the priority of private, inner experience by showing that they rest upon concepts of public, exterior involvement.[2]

Deconstruction blurs the boundary between literature and philosophy. Under deconstruction, literary texts become sites of contradiction eligible for the kind of 'claim against counter-claim' analysis normally associated with philosophy. Philosophy is not left unaltered. Once again, if language is a structure with its own internal properties, then it will refract or resist any endeavour to view the world through it. By stressing the materiality of thought, structuralism challenges the traditional philosophical assumption that our categories grant us direct, transparent access to the nature of things. As a result, philosophy is robbed of its status as a means to truth and becomes, in Richard Rorty's words, just another 'kind of writing', a sub-section of literature.[3] Philosophy, on this account, is interesting not because it is a truthful, transparent account of the world but because it is a network of names, ideas, proposals, and rejections, like a novel. Any attempt by a philosopher to claim that his work is distinct from art and free from the seduction of literary language is, therefore, grist to the deconstructionist's mill. Derrida's reading of Kant's third *Critique* is a good example of this, as I explain below.

Language's ability to refract or subvert meaning is in a significant way unavoidable. No matter how perceptive we are in identifying hidden contradictions in other authors' texts, we ourselves are always subject to our own, similar conceptual blindspots. This goes some way to explaining the double-bind, 'take-apart-then-put-back-together' feel which the term 'deconstruction' has. It is not an analytical, reductive breakdown or 'destruction' of a text into its constituent claims but a form of writing which tries to acknowledge that, although operative metaphors and binarisms can be identified, they and the differential web of which they are a part nevertheless remain intact to reconstruct the critic's own claims. Acknowledgement occurs most tangibly in the performative aspects of Derrida's and de Man's texts (in a comparable sense to Adorno, whose work would also sit quite happily here). Textuality is displayed through puns, word-plays, and the revivification of etymological roots, rather than offering declarative, subject-predicate propositions which give the impression that the writer is in a position to bring closure, to cast conclusive judgment. This sense of a tensional, ineluctable re-enactment draws on Heidegger and his 'destruction' of ancient Greek ontology in *Being and Time*: a hermeneutical 'working-with-and-against' the grammatical and ontological structures bequeathed to language by the Greeks in order to articulate a 'fundamental' ontology, a schema more amenable to human being's prospective, constructive openness towards the world.[4] Deconstruction, on this account, becomes an encounter with the densities and slippages of language that are constitutive of our ability to speak at all.

Derrida's essay 'Parergon' is an impressive deconstruction of the textual instabilities created by the motifs of ornament and framing in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Ornaments, for Kant, are *parerga*: from the Greek, meaning 'what does not belong to the whole presentation of the object as an intrinsic constituent, but [is] only an extrinsic addition'.[5] Questions regarding what is intrinsic and what is extrinsic to a concept or body are paramount for Kant, since he is attempting to show how one order of being, the conceptual, can open onto another, sensibility; he needs to be clear on these terms in order to establish their interaction. Yet, as Derrida evinces, how we determine what can or cannot be embraced by a concept is bound up with the uncertainty of the frame: 'aesthetic judgment *must* properly bear upon intrinsic beauty, not on finery and surrounds. Hence one must know...how to determine the intrinsic – what is framed – and know what one is excluding as frame *and* outside-the-frame.' Depending upon the form in which it appears on or in a work, Kant argues, ornament can *contribute* to beautiful form, as in drapery on statues, or it can amount to nothing more than 'finery' and 'impair genuine beauty', as in a gold frame which is 'merely attached' to a painting. This means the possibility of the boundaries and oppositions within Kant's system being internally coherent – a clear working out of what is intrinsic or extrinsic to his terms – rests upon an aesthetic sense of what contributes to or detracts from genuine beauty. Kant's *theory of* aesthetic experience is therefore organized according to a structure which is explained by *analogy*

to aesthetic experience. The boundaries we exercise in thought are shown to be indi*visible* from the kinds of boundary we encounter in visual experience and, therefore, are made subject to the same contingencies and indeterminacies as sensory life.

However, despite this ingenious display by Derrida of circularity in Kant, it is not the case, as Derrida suggests, that, without its frame, the structure 'collapses forthwith'. For Kant's point is precisely that aesthetic experience is a state of conceptual freeplay in which *object and concept are not identical* or, in a more Derridean idiom, where there is no clear frame. The experience motivates us to find expressions that can begin to describe the experience, and this process is vital to the way in which we assign concepts in our cognitive and moral undertakings. The canvas Kant is working on, I suggest, is broader and more finely woven than Derrida suspects. Nevertheless, his essay is an excellent display of how metaphor and image can organize philosophical argument.

Notes

1 J. Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. A. Bass, Brighton: Harvester, 1982, pp. 207–71.
2 P. de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979, pp. 58–59.
3 R. Rorty, 'Philosophy as a kind of writing: an essay on Derrida', in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, Brighton: Harvester, 1982, pp. 90–109.
4 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Oxford: Blackwell, 1962, §6, pp. 41–49.
5 I. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. W.S. Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987, Ak. 226, p. 72.

■ ■ ■

THE PARERGON

JACQUES DERRIDA

economize on the abyss: not only save oneself from falling into the bottomless depths by weaving and folding back the cloth to infinity, textual art of the reprise, multiplication of patches within patches, but also establish the laws of reappropriation, formalize the rules which constrain the logic of the abyss and which shuttle between the economic *and* the aneconomic, the raising [*la relève*][1] *and* the fall, the abyssal operation which can only work toward the *relève and* that in it which regularly reproduces collapse

what then is the object of the third *Critique*? The critique of pure theoretical reason assumes the exclusion (*Ausschliessung*) of all that is not theoretical knowledge: the affect (*Gefühl*) in its two principal values (pleasure/unpleasure) and the power to desire (*Begehrungsvermögen*). It cuts out its field only by cutting itself off from the interests of desire, by losing interest in desire. From the moment that understanding alone can give

constitutive principles to knowledge, the exclusion bears simultaneously on reason which transgresses the limits of possible knowledge of nature. Now the a priori principles of reason, although regulative with regard to the faculty of knowing, are constitutive with regard to the faculty of desiring. The critique of pure theoretical reason thus excludes both reason *and* desire, desire's reason and reason's desire, the desire for reason.

What is it about, at bottom? The bottom.

The understanding and reason are not two disconnected faculties; they are articulated in a certain task and a certain number of operations which involve, precisely, articulation, i.e., discourse. For between the two faculties, an articulated member, a third faculty comes into play. This intermediary member which Kant names precisely *Mittelglied*, middle articulation, is judgment (*Urteil*). But what will be the nature of the a priori principles of the middle articulation? Will they be constitutive or regulative? Do they give a priori rules to pleasure and unpleasure? What is at stake in this question can be measured by the fact that regulative principles would not allow the demarcation of a *proper domain* (*eigenes Gebiet*).

Since the *Mittelglied* also forms the articulation of the theoretical and the practical (in the Kantian sense), we are plunging into a place that is *neither* theoretical *nor* practical or else *both* theoretical *and* practical. Art (in general), or rather the beautiful, if it takes place, is inscribed here. But this *here*, this place is announced as a place deprived of place. It runs the risk, in taking place, of not having its own proper domain. But this does not deprive it, for all that, of jurisdiction and foundation: what has no domain (*Gebiet*) or field (*Feld*) of its own, no 'field of objects' defining its 'domain,' can have a 'territory' and a 'ground' (*Boden*) possessing a 'proper legality' (*Introduction*, III).

The *Mittelglied*, intermediary member, must in effect be treated as a separable part, a particular part (*als ein besonderer Theil*). But also as a nonparticular, nondetachable part, since it forms the articulation between two others; one can even say, anticipating Hegel, an originary part (*Urteil*). It is indeed a question of judgment. The same paragraph recalls that a critique of pure reason, i.e., of our faculty of judging according to a priori principles, would be 'incomplete' (*unvollständig*) if a theory of judgment, of the *Mittelglied*, did not form a 'particular part' of it. But immediately after, in the following sentence, that in a pure philosophy the principles of judgment would not form a *detached* part, between the theoretical part and the practical part, but could be *attached, annexed* (*angeschlossen*) to each of the two. Kant thus seems to mean two contradictory things at the same time: that it is necessary to disengage the middle member as a detachable part, operate the partition of the part, but also that it is necessary to re-member the whole by re-forming the nexus, the connection, the reannexation of the part to the two major columns of the corpus. Let us not forget that it is here a question of judgment (*Urteil*), of the function of the copula: does it play a separable role, its own part, or does it work in the orchestra of reason, in the concert of the practical and the theoretical?

Let us look more closely at this paragraph in the preface to the third *Critique*. It does not involve any contradiction. The separation of the part is not prescribed and forbidden from the same point of view. Within a critique of pure reason, of our faculty of judging according to a priori principles, the part must be detached and examined separately. But in a pure philosophy, in a 'system of pure philosophy,' everything must be sewn back together. The critique detaches because it is itself only a moment and a part of the system. It is in the critique that, precisely, the critical suspension is produced, the *krinein*, the in-between, the question of knowing whether the theory of judgment is theoretical *or* practical, and whether it is then referred to a regulatory *or* constitutive instance. But the system of pure philosophy *will have had to* include the critical within itself, and construct a general discourse which will get the better of the detachable and account for it. This system of pure philosophy is what Kant calls *metaphysics*. It is not yet possible. Only the critique can have a program that is currently possible.

The question of desire, of pleasure and of unpleasure is thus also the question of a *detachment* (neither the word nor the concept appears *as such* in the *Critique*) which will itself be specified, dismembered or re-membered: *detachment* – separation of a member –, *detachment* – delegation of a representative, sign or symbol on assignment (the beautiful as *symbol* of morality, problems of the hypotyposis, of the trace (*Spur*), of 'cipher-script' (*Chiffreschrift*), of the intermittent sign (*Wink*); see for example paragraphs 42 and 59), *detachment* – disinterested attitude as essence of aesthetic experience.

In order to express the relationship between the two possibles (the now-possible of the critique and the future-possible of metaphysics), Kant proposes another metaphor. He borrows it, already, from art, which has not yet been discussed, from the technique of architecture, architectonics: the pure philosopher, the metaphysician, will have to operate *like* a good architect, like a good *tekhnitēs* of edification. He will be a sort of artist. Now what does a good architect do, according to Kant? He must first of all be certain of the ground, the foundation, the fundament. 'A Critique of pure reason, i.e., of our faculty of judging on a priori principles, would be incomplete if the critical examination of judgment, which is a faculty of knowledge, and, as such, lays claim to independent principles, were not dealt with separately. Still, however, its principles cannot, in a system of pure philosophy, form a separate constituent part intermediate between the theoretical and practical divisions, but may when needful (*im Nothfalle*) be annexed (*angeschlossen*) to one or other as occasion requires (*gelegentlich*). For if such a system is some day worked out (*zu Stande kommen*) under the general name of Metaphysic …, then the critical examination of the ground for this edifice must have been previously carried down to the very depths of the foundations (*Grundlage*) of the faculty of principles independent of experience, lest in some quarter (*an irgend einem Theile*) it might give way (collapse, *sinke*), and, sinking, inevitably bring with it the ruin (*Einsturz*) of all' (Meredith, 4–5).

The proper instance of the critique: the architect of reason searches, probes, prepares the ground. In search of the bedrock, the ultimate *Grund* on which to raise the whole of metaphysics. But also in search of roots, of the common root which then divides in the phenomenal light, and which never itself yields up to experience. Thus the critique as such attempts to descend to the *bythos*, to the *bottom* of the abyss, without knowing whether it exists.

It is still too early to interrogate the general functioning of metaphor and analogy in the third *Critique*. This functioning is perhaps not simply reflected by the theory which, in the book, both includes it and plunges into its abyss.

We have just encountered the first 'metaphor': beginning of the preface (*Vorrede*). Now at the end of the introduction which follows (*Einleitung*), and as if to frame the whole prolegomenon, will be the metaphor of the artificial work securing the passage over the natural gulf, the bridge (*Brücke*) projected over the great abyss (*grosse Kluft*). Philosophy, which in this book has to think art through – art in general and fine art – as a part of its field or of its edifice, is here *representing itself* as a part of its part: philosophy as an art of architecture. It represents itself, it *detaches itself*, detaches from itself a proxy, a part of itself beside itself in order to think the whole, to saturate or heal over the whole that suffers from detachment. The philosophy of art presupposes an art of philosophizing, a major art, but also a miner's art in its critical preliminaries, an architect's art in its edifying erection. And if, as will be said further on, fine art is always an art of genius, then the *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Point of View* would for preference delegate a German to the post of critique: the German genius shows itself best on the side of the root, the Italian on that of the crown of leaves, the French on that of the flower and the English on that of the fruit. Finally, if this pure philosophy or fundamental metaphysics here proposes to account for, among other things, desire, pleasure and unpleasure, it exposes itself and represents itself first of all in its own desire. The desire of reason would be a fundamental desire, a desire for the fundamental, a desire to go to the

bythos. Not an empirical desire since it leads toward the unconditioned, and that which yields itself up in the currency of a determinate metaphor ought, as a metaphor of reason, to account for [*rendre raison de*] all other metaphors. It would figure the being-desire of desire, the desire of/for reason as desire for a grounded structure. Edifying desire would be produced as an art of philosophizing, commanding all the others and accounting for [*rendant raison de*] all rhetoric.

'Great difficulties' arise. A theory of judgment as *Mittelglied* must be constructed. But there will be 'great difficulties' (*grosse Schwierigkeiten*) in finding for judgment a priori principles which are proper to it and which would protect the theory from empiricism. One can find a priori concepts only in the understanding. The faculty of judgment uses them, it applies them, but it does not have at its disposal any concepts which belong to it or are specifically reserved for it. The only concept which it can produce is an empty concept, in a sense, and one which does not give anything to be known. By it, 'nothing is properly known.' It supplies a 'rule' of usage which comprises no objectivity, no relation to the object, no knowledge. The rule is subjective, the faculty of judgment gives itself its own norms, and it must do so, failing which it would be necessary to call upon another faculty or arbitration, *ad infinitum*. And yet this *subjective* rule is applied to judgments, to statements which by their structure lay claim to universal objectivity.

Such would be the difficulty, the constraint, the confusion, the *Verlegenheit*. It seems to confirm a certain Hegelian and subsequently Heideggerian verdict: this discourse on the beautiful and on art, because it remains at the stage of a theory of judgment, gets tangled up in the – derived – opposition of subject and object.

Of the beautiful and of art it has not yet been question. Nothing, up to this point, suggested that it should be a question of these. And now here is Kant declaring that this 'great difficulty' *of principle* (subjective *or* objective), 'is found' (*findet sich*), that it is met with 'principally' (*hauptsächlich*) in the judgments 'which are called aesthetic.' These could have constituted an example, however important, a major occurrence of the 'difficulty.' But in truth it is the principal example, the unique specimen which gives meaning and orients the multiplicity. The examination of this example, namely the aesthetic domain, forms the choice morsel, the 'most important piece' (*das wichtigste Stück*) of the critique of the faculty of judgment. Although they bring *nothing* to knowledge, aesthetic judgments, insofar as they are judgments, come under the faculty of knowing alone, a faculty which they put in relation with pleasure or unpleasure according to an a priori principle. This relationship of knowledge to pleasure reveals itself here in its purity since there is nothing to know, but such is precisely the enigma, the enigmatic (*das Rätselhafte*) at the heart of judgment. It is why a 'special section' (*besondere Abteilung*), a particular division, a cut-out sector, a detached part, form the object of the third *Critique*.

One must not expect from it what in principle it does not, in its declared intention, promise. This critique of taste does not concern production; it has in view neither 'education' nor 'culture,' which can very well do without it. And as the *Critique* will show that one cannot assign conceptual rules to the beautiful, it will not be a question of constituting an *aesthetic*, even a general one, but of analyzing the formal conditions of possibility of an aesthetic judgment in general, hence of an aesthetic objectivity in general.

With this transcendental aim, Kant demands to be read without indulgence. But for the rest, he admits the lacks, the lacunary character (*Mangelhaftigkeit*) of his work. This is the word Hegel uses too.

What does the lack depend on? What lack is it?

And what if it were the frame. What if the lack formed the frame of the theory. Not its accident but its frame. More or less still: what if the lack were not only the lack of a theory of the frame but the place of the lack in a theory of the frame.

Edge [arête]/lack

The 'lacunary character' of his work, according to Kant at least, hangs on the fact that nature has muddled up, complicated, tangled up (*verwickelt*) the problems. The author's excuses are limited to the first part of the work, to the critique of aesthetic judgment, and not to the critique of teleological judgment. It is only in the first part that the deduction will not have the clarity and distinctness (*Deutlichkeit*) which one would, however, be entitled to expect from a knowledge through concepts. After deploring that nature has mixed up the threads, at the moment when he is finishing his critical work (*Hiemit endige ich also mein ganzes kritisches Geschäft*), admitting the lacunae and projecting a bridge over the abyss of the other two critiques, Kant speaks of his age. He must gain time, not let the delay accumulate, hurry on toward the doctrine.

It's about pleasure. About thinking pure pleasure, the being-pleasure of pleasure. Starting out from pleasure, it was for pleasure that the third *Critique* was written, for pleasure that it should be read. A somewhat arid pleasure – without concept and without enjoyment – a somewhat strict pleasure, but one learns once more that there is no pleasure without stricture. In letting myself be guided by pleasure I recognize and simultaneously put astray an injunction. *I follow it* [je le suis]: the enigma of pleasure puts the whole book in movement. *I seduce it* [je le séduis]: in treating the third *Critique* as a work of art or a beautiful object, which it was not simply designed to be, I act as if the *existence* of the book were indifferent to me (which, as Kant explains, is a requirement of any aesthetic experience) and could be considered with an imperturbable detachment.

But what is the existence of a book?

1. *I follow it*. The possibility of pleasure is *the* question. Demonstration: the first two paragraphs of the 'First moment of the judgment of taste considered from the point of view of quality,' book 1 ('Analytic of the Beautiful') of the first section ('Analytic of Aesthetic Judgment') of the first part ('Critique of Aesthetic Judgment'). Why call a judgment of taste *aesthetic*? Because, in order to distinguish whether a thing can be called beautiful, I do not consult the relation of the representation to the *object*, with a view to knowledge (the judgment of taste does not give us any knowledge) but its relation to the *subject* and to its affect (pleasure or unpleasure). The judgment of taste is not a judgment of knowledge, it is not 'logical' but subjective and therefore aesthetic: relation to the affect (*aisthesis*). Any relation of representation can potentially be objective, even a relation of the senses; but pleasure and unpleasure never can. Aesthetic representations can certainly give rise to logical judgments when they are related by the judgment to the object, but when the judgment itself relates to the subject, to the subjective affect – as is the case here – it is and can only be an aesthetic one.

What is generally translated by subjective satisfaction, the *Wohlgefallen*, the *pleasing* which determines aesthetic judgment, must, we know, be disinterested. Interest (*Interesse*) always relates us to the *existence* of an object. I am interested by an object when its existence (*Existenz*) matters to me in one way or another. Now the question of knowing whether I can say of a thing that it is beautiful has, according to Kant, nothing to do with the interest that I do or do not have in its existence. And my pleasure (*Lust*), that species of *pleasing* which is called pleasure and which I feel when faced with that which I judge to be beautiful, requires an indifference or more rigorously an absolute lack of interest for the existence of the thing.

This pure and disinterested pleasure (but not indifferent: Heidegger here reproaches Nietzsche with not having understood the nonindifferent structure of this letting-be), this pleasure which draws me toward a nonexistence or at least toward a thing (but what is a thing? Need here to graft on the Heideggerian question) the existence of which is indifferent to me, such a pleasure determines the judgment of taste and the enigma of the bereaved [*endeuillé*] relation – labor of mourning broached in advance – to beauty. Like a sort of transcendental reduction, the *epochē* of a thesis of existence the suspension of which liberates, in certain formal conditions, the pure feeling of pleasure.

The example is familiar. I am in front of a palace. I am asked if I find it beautiful, or rather if I can say 'this is beautiful.' It is a question of judgment, of a judgment of universal validity and everything must therefore be able to be produced in the form of statements, questions, and answers. Although the aesthetic affect cannot be reduced, the instance of the judgment commands that I be able to *say* 'this is beautiful' or 'this is not beautiful.'

Is the palace I'm speaking about beautiful? All kinds of answers can miss the point of the question. If I say, I don't like things made for idle gawpers, or else, like the Iroquois sachem, I prefer the pubs, or else, in the manner of Rousseau, what we have here is a sign of the vanity of the great who exploit the people in order to produce frivolous things, or else if I were on a desert island and if I had the means to do so, I would still not go to the trouble of having it imported, etc., none of these answers constitutes an intrinsically aesthetic judgment. I have evaluated this palace in fact in terms of *extrinsic* motives, in terms of empirical psychology, of economic relations of production, of political structures, of technical causality, etc.

Now you have to know what you're talking about, what *intrinsically* concerns the value 'beauty' and what remains external to your immanent sense of beauty. This permanent requirement – to distinguish between the internal or proper sense and the circumstance of the object being talked about – organizes all philosophical discourses on art, the meaning of art and meaning as such, from Plato to Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger. This requirement presupposes a discourse on the limit between the inside and outside of the art object, here a *discourse on the frame*. Where is it to be found?

What they want to know, according to Kant, when they ask me if I find this palace beautiful, is if I find that it *is beautiful*, in other words if the mere representation of the object – in itself, within itself – pleases me, if it produces in me a pleasure, however indifferent (*gleichgültig*) I may remain to the existence of that object. 'It is quite plain that in order to say that the object *is beautiful*, and to show that I have taste, everything turns on the meaning which I can give to this representation, and not on any factor which makes me dependent on the real existence of the object. Every one must allow that a judgement on the beautiful which is tinged with the slightest interest, is very partial and not a pure judgement of taste. One must not be in the least prepossessed in favour of the real existence of the thing (*Existenz der Sache*), but must preserve complete indifference in this respect, in order to play the part of judge in matters of taste.

'This proposition, which is of the utmost importance, cannot be better explained than by contrasting the pure disinterested delight (*uninteressirten Wohlgefallen*) which appears in the judgement of taste with that allied (*verbunden*) to an interest – especially if we can also assure ourselves that there are no other kinds of interest beyond those presently to be mentioned.' These other kinds are the interest for the existence of the *agreeable* and for the existence of the *good* (Meredith, 43–44).

a disinterested pleasure: the formula is too well known, too received, as is the refusal it has never ceased to provoke. Anger of Nietzsche and Artaud: disinterest or uninterestedness are supererogatory. Meditative murmur from Heidegger, at the end of *The Origin*: pleasure is superfluous or insufficient.

Don't be in too much of a hurry to conclude when it's a matter of pleasure. In this case, of a pleasure which would thus be pure and disinterested, which would in this way deliver itself up in the purity of its essence, without contamination from outside. It no longer depends on any phenomenal empiricity, of any determined *existence*, whether that of the object or that of the subject, my empiricity relating me precisely to the existence of the beautiful object, or to the existence of my sensory motivation. As such, and considered intrinsically (but how to delimit the intrinsic, that which runs along, *secus*, the internal limit?), the pleasure presupposes not the disappearance pure and simple, but the neutralization, not simply the putting to death but the *mise en crypte* [entombment/encrypting] of all that exists in as much as it exists. This pleasure is purely subjective: in the aesthetic judgment it does not designate (*bezeichnet*) anything about the object. But its subjectivity is not an existence, nor even a relation to existence. It is an inexistent or anexistent subjectivity arising on the crypt of the empirical subject and its whole world.

But a subjectivity which nevertheless enjoys. No, does not enjoy: Kant distinguishes pleasure (*Wohlgefallen, Lust*) from enjoyment (*Genuss*). Takes pleasure. No, for it *receives* it just as much. If the translation of *Wohlgefallen* by *pleasure* is not entirely rigorous, and that by *satisfaction* even less so, the *pleasing* risks leaning toward the agreeable and letting us think that everything comes from the object which pleases. In truth, in the *Wohlgefallen* I *please myself*,[2] but without complaisance, I do not interest myself, especially not in myself insofar as I exist: I-please-myself-*in*. Not in any thing that exists, not in doing something or other. *I-please-myself-in pleasing-myself-in* – that which is beautiful. Insofar as it does not exist.

As this affect of the *pleasing-oneself-in* remains subjective through and through, one could here speak of an autoaffection. The role of imagination and hence of time in this whole discourse would confirm this. Nothing existent, as such, nothing in time or space can produce this affect which thus cathects itself with itself [*qui s'affecte donc lui-même de lui-même*]. And yet the *pleasing-oneself-in*, the *in* of the *pleasing-oneself* also indicates that this autoaffection immediately goes outside its inside: it is a pure heteroaffection. The purely subjective affect is provoked by what is called the beautiful, that which is said to be beautiful: *outside*, in the object and independently of its existence. Whence the critical and indispensable character of this recourse to judgment: the structure of autoaffection is such that it cathects itself with a pure objectivity of which one *must* say 'it *is* beautiful' and 'this statement has universal validity.' Otherwise, there would be no problem – and no discourse on art. *The entirely-other cathects me with pure pleasure by depriving me both of concept and enjoyment*. Without this entirely-other, there would be no universality, no requirement of universality, but for the same reason, with respect to that entirely other, there is no enjoyment (singular, empirical, existent, interested) or determinant or knowledge concept. And nothing theoretical or practical yet. The most irreducible heteroaffection inhabits – intrinsically – the most closed autoaffection: that is the '*grosse Schwierigkeit*': it does not hang on the comfortable setting-up of a very derivative subject/object couple, in a supervening judicative space. Nor from some well-oiled mechanism of *mimēsis, homoiosis, adaequatio*. We know that Kant rejects the notion of imitation, at least initially. As for *homoiosis* or *adaequatio*, the matter becomes, to say the least, complicated as soon as one is dealing no longer with a determinant judgment but with a reflective judgment, and as soon as the *res* in question does not exist, or in any case is not considered in its existence as a thing. It is at the end of a quite different itinerary that we shall verify the efficacy of these values (*mimēsis, homoiosis, adaequatio*) in Kant's discourse[3]

almost nothing

remains (to me): neither the thing, nor its existence, nor mine, neither the pure object nor the pure subject, no interest of anything that is in anything that is. And yet I like: no, that's still going too far, that's still taking an interest in existence, no doubt. I do not like, but I take pleasure in what does not interest me, in something of which it is at least a matter of indifference whether I like it or not. I do not take this pleasure that I take, it would seem rather that I return it, I return what I take, I receive what I return, I do not take what I receive. And yet I give it to myself. Can I say that I give it to myself? It is so universally objective – in the claim made by my judgment and by common sense – that it can only come from a pure outside. Unassimilable. At a pinch, I do not even feel this pleasure which I give myself or rather to which I give myself, by which I give myself, if to feel [*éprouver*] means to experience [*ressentir*]: phenomenally, empirically, in the space and time of my interested or interesting existence. Pleasure which it is impossible to experience. I never take it, never receive it, never return it, never give it, never give it to myself because *I* (me, existing subject) never have access to the beautiful as such. I never have access to pure pleasure inasmuch as I exist.

And yet *there is* pleasure, some still remains; *there is, es gibt, it gives*, the pleasure is what *it gives*; to nobody but some remains and it's the best, the purest. And it is this remainder which causes *talk*, since it is, once again, primarily a question of *discourse* on the beautiful, of discursivity *in* the structure of the beautiful and not only of a discourse supposed to happen accidentally *to* the beautiful.

2. *I seduce it*: by treating the third critique as a work of art, I neutralize or encrypt its existence. But I will not be able to find out whether, in order to do this, I must find my authority in the *Critique*, so long as I don't know what the existence of a thing is, and consequently interest in the existence of a thing. What is it to exist, for Kant? To be present, according to space and time, as an individual thing: according to the conditions of the transcendental aesthetic. There is nothing less aesthetic in this sense than the beautiful object which must not interest us *qua aistheton*. But this aesthetic inexistence must affect me and that is why the retention of the word aesthetic is justified, from the start.

When the (beautiful) object is a book, what exists and what no longer exists? The book is not to be confused with the sensory multiplicity of its existing copies. The object *book* thus presents itself as such, in its intrinsic structure, as independent of its *copies*. But what one would then call its ideality is not pure; a very discriminating analysis must distinguish it from ideality in general, from the ideality of other types of object, and in the area of art, from that of other classes of books (novel, poetry, etc.) or of nondiscursive or nonbook art objects (painting, sculpture, music, theater, etc.). In each case the structure of exemplarity (unique or multiple) is original and therefore prescribes a different affect. And in each case there remains to be found out what importance one gives to the case [*le cas qu'on fait du cas*], to know whether one drops it as an extrinsic excrement, or retains it as an intrinsic ideality.

Here is an example, but an example *en abyme*: the third *Critique*. How to treat this book. Is it a book. What would make a book of it. What is it to read this book. How to take it. Have I the right to say that it is beautiful. And first of all the right to ask myself that

for example the question of

order. A spatial, so-called plastic, art object does not necessarily prescribe an order of reading. I can move around in front of it, start from the top or the bottom, sometimes walk round it. No doubt this possibility has an ideal limit. Let us say for the moment that the structure of this limit allows a greater play than in the case of temporal art objects (whether discursive or not), unless a certain fragmentation, a spatial *mise en scène*, precisely (an effective or virtual partition)[4] allows us to begin in various places, to vary direction or speed.

But a book. And a book of philosophy. If it is a book of metaphysics in the Kantian sense, hence a book of pure philosophy, one can in principle enter it from any point: it is a sort of architecture. In the third *Critique*, there is pure philosophy, there is talk of it and its plan is drawn. In terms of the analogy (but how to measure its terms) one ought to be able to begin anywhere and follow any order, although the quantity and the quality, the force of the reading may depend, as with a piece of architecture, on the point of view and on a certain relation to the ideal limit – which acts as a frame. There are only ever points of view: but the solidity, the existence, the structure of the edifice do not depend on them. Can one say the same, by analogy, of a book. One does not necessarily gain access to a piece of architecture by following the order of its production, starting at the foundations and arriving at the roof-ridge. And we must distinguish here between perception, analysis, penetration, utilization, even destruction. But does one read a book of pure philosophy if one does not begin with the foundations and follow the juridical order of its writing. What then is it to read philosophy and must one only read it. To be sure, the juridical order supported by the foundations does not coincide with the factual order: for example, Kant wrote his introduction after finishing the book and it is the most powerful effort to gather together the whole system of his philosophy, to give his whole discourse a *de jure* foundation, to articulate critique with philosophy. The introduction follows, the foundation comes after having come first. But even if it were established that in principle, in metaphysics in the Kantian sense, one must begin at the foundations, critique is not metaphysics: it is, *first, in search of* the foundation (and thus in fact comes *afterwards*), suspended like a crane or a dragline bucket above the pit, working to scrape, probe, clear, and open up a sure ground. In what order to read a critique. The *de facto* order or the *de jure* order. The *ordo inveniendi* or the *ordo exponendi*. All these questions differ/defer, each is subordinate to the others, and whatever their interminable breadth, they are valid in general for any critical text.

a supplementary complication constrains us to reconsider the way these questions fit together. The third *Critique* is not just one critique among others. Its specific object has the form of a certain type of judgment – the reflective judgment – which works (on) the example in a very singular way. The distinction between reflective and determinant judgment, a distinction that is both familiar and obscure, watches over all the internal divisions of the book. I recall it in its poorest generality. The faculty of judgment *in general* allows one to think the particular as contained under the general (rule, principle, law). When the generality is given first, the operation of judgment subsumes and *determines* the particular. It is determinant (*bestimmend*), it specifies, narrows down, comprehends, tightens. In the contrary hypothesis, the *reflective* judgment (*reflectirend*) has only the particular at its disposal and must climb back up to, return toward generality: the example (this is what matters to us here) is here given prior to the law and, in its very uniqueness as example, allows one to

discover that law. Common scientific or logical discourse proceeds by determinant judgments, and the example follows in order to determine or, with a pedagogical intention, to illustrate. In art and in life, wherever one must, according to Kant, proceed to reflective judgments and assume (by analogy with art: we shall come to this rule further on) a finality[5] the concept of which we do not have, the *example precedes*. There follows a singular historicity and (counting the simulacrum-time) a certain (regulated, relative) ficture of the theoretical

on the authority of this reflective hinge,[6] I begin my reading of the third *Critique* with some examples.

Is this docility perverse. Nothing yet permits a decision.

So I begin with some examples: not with the introduction, which gives the laws, nor with the beginning of the book (the analytic of the beautiful). Nor with the middle nor the end, but somewhere near the conclusion of the analytic of the beautiful, paragraph 14. It is entitled 'Clarification by Examples' (*Erlaüterung durch Beispiele*).

Its most obvious intention is to clarify the structure of 'the proper object of the pure judgment of taste' (*den eigentlichen Gegenstand des reinen Geschmacksurtheils*). I shall not even cite all the examples, but only some of them, and I shall provisionally leave to one side the very complicated theory of colors and sounds, of drawing and composition, which is unfolded between the two fragments I translate here. Unless it be broached at the same time. I shall in any case assume you have read it.

'Aesthetic, just like theoretical (logical) judgements, are divisible into empirical and pure. The first are those by which agreeableness or disagreeableness, the second those by which beauty, is predicated of an object or its mode of representation. The former are judgements of sense (material aesthetic judgements), the latter (as formal) alone judgements of taste proper (*allein eigentliche Geschmacksurtheile*).

'A judgement of taste, therefore, is only pure so far as its determining ground (*Bestimmungsgrunde*) is tainted with no merely empirical delight (*Wohlgefallen*). But such a taint is always present where charm (*Reiz*) or emotion (*Rührung*) have a share in the judgement (*einen Antheil an dem Urtheile haben*) by which something is to be described as beautiful… .

'All form of objects of sense (both of external and also, mediately, of internal sense) is either *figure* (*Gestalt*) or *play* (*Spiel*). In the latter case it is either play of figures (in space: mimic and dance), or mere play of sensations (in time). The charm (*Reiz*) of colours, or of the agreeable tones of instruments, may be added (*hinzukommen*): but the *design* (*Zeichnung*) in the former and the composition (*Composition*) in the latter constitute the proper object of the pure judgement of taste. To say that the purity alike of colours and of tones, or their variety and contrast, seem to contribute (*beizutragen*) to beauty, is by no means to imply that, because in themselves agreeable, they therefore yield an addition (*einen … Zusatz*) to the delight in the form (*Wohlgefallen an der Form*) and one on a par with it (*gleichartigen*). The real meaning rather is that they make this form more clearly, definitely, and completely (*nur genauer, bestimmter und vollständiger*) intuitable (*anschaulich machen*), and besides stimulate the representation by their charm, as they excite and sustain the attention directed to the object itself.

'Even what is called *ornamentation* [*Zierathen*: decoration, adornment, embellishment] (*Parerga*), i.e., what is only an adjunct, and not an intrinsic constituent in the complete

representation of the object (*was nicht in die ganze Vorstellung des Gegenstandes als Bestandstück innerlich, sondern nur äusserlich als Zuthat gehört*), in augmenting the delight of taste does so only by means of its form. Thus it is with the frames (*Einfassungen*) of pictures or the drapery on statues, or the colonnades of palaces. But if the ornamentation does not itself enter into the composition of the beautiful form – if it is introduced (*angebracht*: fixed on) like a gold frame (*goldene Rahmen*) merely to win approval for the picture by means of its charm – it is then called *finery* [*parure*] (*Schmuck*) and takes away from the genuine beauty' (Meredith, 65, 67–68).

a theory which would run along as if on wheels

the

clothes on statues – for example – would thus be ornaments: *parerga*.

Kant explains himself elsewhere on the necessity of having recourse to dead or scholarly languages. The Greek here confers a quasi-conceptual dignity to the notion of this *hors-d'oeuvre* which however does not stand simply outside the work [*hors d'oeuvre*], also acting alongside, right up against the work (*ergon*). Dictionaries most often give 'hors-d'oeuvre,' which is the strictest translation, but also 'accessory, foreign or secondary object,' 'supplement,' 'aside,' 'remainder.' It is what the principal subject *must not become*, by being separated from itself: the education of children in legislation (*Laws* 766a) or the definition of science (*Theaetetus* 184a) *must not* be treated as *parerga*. In the search for the cause or the knowledge of principles, *one must avoid* letting the *parerga* get the upper hand over the essentials (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1098a 30). Philosophical discourse will always have been *against* the *parergon*. But what about this *against*.

A parergon comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside. Neither simply outside nor simply inside. Like an accessory that one is obliged to welcome on the border, on board [*au bord, à bord*]. It is first of all the on (the) bo(a)rd(er) [*Il est d'abord l'à-bord*].

If we wanted to play a little – for the sake of poetics – at etymology, the *à-bord* would refer us to the Middle High German *bort* (table, plank, deck of a vessel). 'The *bord* is thus properly speaking a plank; and etymology allows us to grasp the way its meanings link together. The primary meaning is the deck of a vessel, i.e., a construction made of planks; then, by metonymy, that which borders, that which encloses, that which limits, that which is at the extremity.' Says Littré.

But the *etymon* will always have had, for whoever knows how to read, its border-effects.

Boats are never far away when one is handling figures of rhetoric.[7] Brothel [*bordel*] has the same etymology; it's an easy one, at first a little hut made of wood.

The *bord* is made of wood, and apparently indifferent like the frame of a painting. Along with stone, better than stone, wood names matter (*hylē* means wood). These questions of wood, of matter, of the frame, of the limit between inside and outside, must, somewhere in the margins, be constituted together.

The *parergon*, this supplement outside the work, must, if it is to have the status of a philosophical quasi-concept, designate a formal and general predicative structure, which one can transport *intact* or deformed and reformed *according to certain rules*, into other fields, to submit new contents to it. Now Kant does use the word *parergon* elsewhere: the context is very different but the structure is analogous and just as problematical. It is to be found in a very long note added to the second edition of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. This place, the form of this place, is of great import.

To what is the 'Note' appended? To a 'General Remark' which closes the second part.

Now what is the *parergon*? It is the concept of the remark, of this 'General Remark,' insofar as it defines what comes to be added to *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* without being a part of it and yet without being absolutely extrinsic to it. Each part of the book comprises a 'General Remark' (*Allgemeine Anmerkung*), a *parergon* concerning a *parergon*. As there are four parts to *Religion*, then the book is in a manner of speaking *framed* [*cadrée*], but also squared up [*quadrillée*][8] by these four remarks on *parerga*, hors-d'oeuvres, 'additives' which are neither inside nor outside.

The beginning of the note appended, in the second edition, to the first of the 'General Remarks,' defines the status of the remark as *parergon*: 'This general Remark is the first of four which have been added [*angehängt*: appended, like appendixes] to each piece of this text (*jedem Stück dieser Schrift*) and which might have as titles: (1) Of the effects of grace; (2) Of miracles; (3) Of mysteries; (4) Of the means of grace. They are in some measure *parerga* of religion within the limits of pure reason; they are not integral parts of it (*sie gehören nicht innerhalb dieselben*) but they verge on it [*aber stossen doch an sie an*: they touch it, push it, press it, press against it, seek contact, exert a pressure at the frontier]. Reason, conscious of its impotence (*Unvermögens*) to satisfy its moral need [the only need which should ground or should have grounded religion within the limits of reason alone], reaches as far as these transcendent ideas which are potentially able to make good the lack (*die jenen Mangel ergänzen*), without however appropriating them (*sich zuzueignen*) as extension of its domain (*Besitz*, possession). It contests neither the possibility nor the reality of the objects of these ideas but it cannot admit them into its maxims for thought and action. It even holds that if, in the unfathomable field of the supernatural, there is something more (*noch etwas mehr*) than what it can render intelligible to itself and which would however be necessary to supply [Gibelin's translation of *Ergänzung*] its moral insufficiency, this thing, even though unknown, will come to the aid (*zu statten kommen*) of its good will, thanks to a faith which one could call (as regards its possibility) *reflective* (*reflectirenden*) because the dogmatic faith which declares that it *knows* seems to it presumptuous and not very sincere; for to remove difficulties with regard to what is in itself (in practical terms) well established is only a secondary task (*parergon*) when those difficulties concern transcendent questions.'

What is translated as 'secondary task' is *Nebengeschäfte*: incidental business or bustle, activity or operation which comes *beside* or *against*. The *parergon* inscribes something which comes as an extra, *exterior* to the proper field (here that of pure reason and of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*) but whose transcendent exteriority comes to play, abut onto, brush against, rub, press against the limit itself and intervene in the inside only to the extent that the inside is lacking. It is lacking *in* something and it is lacking *from itself*. Because reason is 'conscious of its impotence to satisfy its moral need,' it has recourse to the *parergon*, to grace, to mystery, to miracles. It needs the supplementary work. This additive, to be sure, is threatening. Its use is critical. It involves a risk and exacts a price the theory of which is elaborated. To each *parergon* of *Religion* there is a corresponding damage, a detriment (*Nachteil*) and the four classes of dangers will correspond to the four types of *parergon*: (1) for the would-be internal experience (effects of grace), there is *fanaticism*; (2) for the would-be external experience (miracles), there is *superstition*; (3) for the would-be insight of the understanding into the supernatural order there is *illuminism*; (4)

for the would-be actions on the supernatural (means of grace), there is *thaumaturgy*. These four aberrations or seductions of reason nevertheless also have in view a certain pleasing, pleasing-God (*gottgefälliger Absicht*).

So, as an example among examples, the clothing on statues (*Gewänder an Statuen*) would have the function of a *parergon* and an ornament. This means (*das heisst*), as Kant makes clear, that which is not internal or intrinsic (*innerlich*), as an integral part (*als Bestandstück*), to the total representation of the object (*in die ganze Vorstellung des Gegenstandes*) but which belongs to it only in an extrinsic way (*nur äusserlich*) as a surplus, an addition, an adjunct (*als Zuthat*), a supplement.

Hors-d'oeuvres, then, the clothes of statues, which both decorate and veil their nudity. Hors-d'oeuvres stuck onto the edging of the work nonetheless, and to the edging of the represented body to the extent that – such is the argument – they supposedly do not belong to the whole of the representation. What is represented in the representation would be the naked and natural body; the representative essence of the statue would be related to this, and the only beautiful thing in the statue would be that representation; it alone would be essentially, purely, and intrinsically beautiful, 'the proper object of a pure judgment of taste.'

This delimitation of the center and the integrity of the representation, of its inside and its outside, might already seem strange. One wonders, too, where to have clothing commence. Where does a *parergon* begin and end. Would any garment be a *parergon*. G-strings and the like. What to do with absolutely transparent veils. And how to transpose the statement to painting. For example, Cranach's Lucretia holds only a light band of transparent veil in front of her sex: where is the *parergon*? Should one regard as a *parergon* the dagger which is not part of her naked and natural body and whose point she holds turned toward herself, touching her skin (in that case only the point of the *parergon* would touch her body, in the middle of a triangle formed by her two breasts and her navel)? A *parergon*, the necklace that she wears around her neck? The question of the representative and objectivizing essence, of its outside and its inside, of the criteria engaged in this delimitation, of the value of naturalness which is presupposed in it, and, secondarily or primarily, of the place of the human body or of its privilege in this whole problematic. If any *parergon* is only added on by virtue of an internal lack in the system to which it is added (as was verified in *Religion*), what is it that is lacking in the representation of the body so that the garment should come and supplement it? And what would art have to do with this? What would it give to be seen? Cause to be seen? Let us see? Let us cause to be seen? Or let itself be shown?

We are only at the beginning of our astonishment at this paragraph. (*Parergon* also means the exceptional, the strange, the extraordinary.) I have torn the 'garment' a little too hastily from the middle of a series of three examples, of three parerga which are no less strange. Each in itself, first of all, and then in their association. The example immediately following is that of the columns around sumptuous buildings (*Säulengänge um Prachtgebäude*). These columns are also, then, supplementary *parerga*. After the garment, the column? Why would the column be external to the building? Where does the criterion, the critical organ, the organum of discernment come from here? It is no less obscure than in the previous case. It even presents an extra difficulty: the *parergon* is added this time to a work which *does not represent anything* and which is itself already *added to* nature. We think we know what properly belongs or does not belong to the human body, what is detached or not detached from it – even though the parergon is precisely an ill-detachable detachment. But in a work of architecture, the *Vorstellung*, the representation is not structurally representational or else is so only through detours complicated enough, no doubt, to disconcert anyone who tried to discern, in a critical manner, the inside from the outside, the integral part and the detachable part. So as not to add to these complications, I shall leave to one side, provisionally, the case of columns in the form of the human body, those that support

Lucas Cranach, *Lucretia*, 1533 © bpk/Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

or represent the support of a window (and does a window form part of the inside of a building or not? And what about the window of a building in a painting?), and which can be naked or clothed, can represent a man or a woman, a distinction to which Kant makes no reference.

With this example of the columns is announced the whole problematic of inscription in a milieu, of the marking out of the work in a field of which it is always difficult to decide if it is natural or artificial and, in this latter case, if it is *parergon* or *ergon*. For not every milieu, even if it is contiguous with the work, constitutes a *parergon* in the Kantian sense. The natural site chosen for

the erection of a temple is obviously not a *parergon*. Nor is an artificial site: neither the crossroads, nor the church, nor the museum, nor the other works around one or other. But the garment or the column is. Why? It is not because they are detached but on the contrary because they are more difficult to detach and above all because without them, without their quasi-detachment, the lack on the inside of the work would appear; or (which amounts to the same thing for a lack) would not appear. What constitutes them as *parerga* is not simply their exteriority as a surplus, it is the internal structural link which rivets them to the lack in the interior of the *ergon*. And this lack would be constitutive of the very unity of the *ergon*. Without this lack, the *ergon* would have no need of a *parergon*. The *ergon*'s lack is the lack of a *parergon*, of the garment or the column which nevertheless remains exterior to it. How to give *energeia* its due?

Can one attach the third example to this series of examples, to the question that they pose? It is in fact the first of the examples, and I have proceeded in reverse. In appearance it is difficult to associate it with the other two. It is to do with the frames for paintings (*Einfassungen der Gemälde*). The frame: a *parergon* like the others. The series might seem surprising. How can one assimilate the function of a frame to that of a garment on (in, around, or up against) a statue, and to that of columns around a building? And what about a frame framing a painting representing a building surrounded by columns in clothed human form? What is incomprehensible about the edge, about the *à-bord* appears not only at the internal limit, the one that passes between the frame and the painting, the clothing and the body, the column and the building, but also at the external limit. *Parerga* have a thickness, a surface which separates them not only (as Kant would have it) from the integral inside, from the body proper of the *ergon*, but also from the outside, from the wall on which the painting is hung, from the space in which statue or column is erected, then, step by step, from the whole field of historical, economic, political inscription in which the drive to signature is produced (an analogous problem, as we shall see further on). No 'theory,' no 'practice,' no 'theoretical practice' can intervene effectively in this field if it does not weigh up and bear on the frame, which is the decisive structure of what is at stake, at the invisible limit to (between) the interiority of meaning (put under shelter by the whole hermeneuticist, semioticist, phenomenologicalist, and formalist tradition) *and* (to) all the empiricisms of the extrinsic which, incapable of either seeing or reading, miss the question completely.

The *parergon* stands out [*se détache*] both from the *ergon* (the work) and from the milieu, it stands out first of all like a figure on a ground. But it does not stand out in the same way as the work. The latter also stands out against a ground. But the parergonal frame stands out against two grounds [*fonds*], but with respect to each of those two grounds, it merges [*se fond*] into the other. With respect to the work which can serve as a ground for it, it merges into the wall, and then, gradually, into the general text. With respect to the background which the general text is, it merges into the work which stands out against the general background. There is always a form on a ground, but the *parergon* is a form which has as its traditional determination not that it stands out but that it disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy. The frame is in no case a background in the way that the milieu or the work can be, but neither is its thickness as margin a figure. Or at least it is a figure which comes away of its own accord [*s'enlève d'ellemême*].

What would Kant have said about a frame framing a painting representing a building surrounded by columns (examples of this are numerous), columns in the form of clothed human bodies (the frescoes on the vault of the Sistine Chapel – what is its frame? – whose represented, painted object is a sculpted volume itself representing, for example to the right of Jonah, naked children forming a column which supports a ceiling, etc. Same implication around the Persian Sibyl or around Zachariah holding a book in his hand, or around Jeremiah, or the Libyan Sibyl; it is difficult to say whether the children-columns are clothed or unclothed: they are *bearing* clothes), the whole frame being placed on the easel of a painter who is himself represented by another painting.

It may appear that I am taking unfair advantage by persisting with two or three possibly fortuitous examples from a secondary subchapter; and that it would be better to go to less marginal places in the work, nearer to the center and the heart of the matter [*le fond*]. To be sure. The objection presupposes that one already knows what is the center or the heart of the third *Critique*, that one has already located its frame and the limit of its field. But nothing seems more difficult to determine. The *Critique* presents itself as a work (*ergon*) with several sides, and as such it ought to allow itself to be centered and framed, to have its ground delimited by being marked out, with a frame, against a general background. But this frame is problematical. I do not know what is essential and what is accessory in a work. And above all I do not know what this thing is, that is neither essential nor accessory, neither proper nor improper, and that Kant calls *parergon*, for example the frame. Where does the frame take place. Does it take place. Where does it begin. Where does it end. What is its internal limit. Its external limit. And its surface between the two limits. I do not know whether the passage in the third *Critique* where the *parergon* is defined is itself a *parergon*. Before deciding what is parergonal in a text which poses the question of the *parergon*, one has to know what a *parergon* is – at least, if there is any such thing.

To the impatient objector, if s/he insists on seeing the thing itself at last: the whole analytic of aesthetic judgment forever assumes that one can distinguish rigorously between the intrinsic and the extrinsic. Aesthetic judgment *must* properly bear upon intrinsic beauty, not on finery and surrounds. Hence one must know – this is a fundamental presupposition, presupposing what is fundamental – how to determine the intrinsic – what is framed – and know what one is excluding as frame *and* outside-the-frame. We are thus *already* at the unlocatable center of the problem. And when Kant replies to our question 'What is a frame?' by saying: it's a *parergon*, a hybrid of outside and inside, but a hybrid which is not a mixture or a half-measure, an outside which is called to the inside of the inside in order to constitute it as an inside; and when he gives as examples of the *parergon*, alongside the frame, clothing and column, we ask to see, we say to ourselves that there are 'great difficulties' here, and that the choice of examples, and their association, is not self-evident.

The more so because, according to the logic of the supplement, the parergon is divided in two. At the limit between work and absence of work, it divides in two. And this division gives rise to a sort of pathology of the *parergon*, the forms of which must be named and classified, just as *Religion* recognized four types of parergonal misdeeds or detriments. Kant is in the process of determining 'the proper object of the pure judgment of taste.' But he does not simply exclude from it the parergon as such and in general. Only in certain conditions. The criterion of exclusion is here a formality.

What must we understand by formality?

The *parergon* (frame, garment, column) can augment the pleasure of taste (*Wohlgefallen des Geschmacks*), contribute to the proper and intrinsically aesthetic representation if it intervenes *by its form* (*durch seine Form*) and only by its form. If it has a 'beautiful form,' it forms part of the judgment of taste properly speaking or in any case intervenes directly in it. This is, if you like, the normal *parergon*. But if on the other hand it is not beautiful, purely beautiful, i.e., of a formal beauty, it lapses into *adornment* (*Schmuck*) and harms the beauty of the work, it does it wrong and causes it detriment (*Abbruch*). This is analogous to the detriment or damage (*Nachteil*) of *Religion*.

Now the example of this degradation of the simple *parergon* into a seductive adornment is again a frame, this time the gilded frame (*goldene Rahmen*), the gilding of the frame done in order to recommend the painting to our attention by its attraction (*Reiz*). What is bad, external to the pure object of taste, is thus what seduces by an attraction; and the example of what leads astray by its force of attraction is a color, the gilding, in as much as it is nonform, content, or sensory matter. The deterioration of the *parergon*, the perversion, the adornment, is the attraction of sensory matter. As

design, organization of lines, forming of angles, the frame is not at all an adornment and one cannot do without it. But in its purity, it ought to remain colorless, deprived of all empirical sensory materiality.

This opposition form/matter governs, as we know, the whole *Critique* and inscribes it within a powerful tradition. According to *The Origin of the Work of Art*, it is one of the three determinations (*hypokeimenon/symbebekos, aistheton/noeton, eidosmorphe/hylē*) which fall violently upon the thing. It procures a 'conceptual schema' (*Begriffsschema*) for any theory of art. It suffices to associate the rational with the formal, the irrational with matter, the irrational with the illogical, the rational with the logical, to couple the whole lot to the subject/object pair, in order to have at one's disposal a *Begriffsmechanik* that nothing can resist. But from what region does this determination of the thing as formed matter come? Its wholesale usage by aesthetics allows us to conceive of it as a deportation from the domain of art. In any case, Christian creationism would, according to Heidegger, have brought with it a 'particular incitement,' a supplementary motivation for considering the form-matter complex as the structure of every entity, the *ens creatum* as the unity of *forma* and *materia*. Though faith has disappeared, the schemas of Christian philosophy remain effective. 'Thus it is that the interpretation of the thing in terms of matter and form, whether it remains medieval or becomes transcendental in the Kantian sense, has become common and self-evident. But this does not make it any less than the other interpretations of the thingness of the thing a superimposition fallen onto (*Überfall*) the being-thing of the thing. This situation reveals itself already in the fact of naming things properly speaking (*eigentlichen Dinge*) things pure and simple [*bloss Dinge*: naked things]. This "naked" (*bloss*) does however mean the stripping (*Entblössung*) of the character of usefulness (*Dienlichkeit*) and of being made. The naked thing (*blosse Ding*) is a sort of product (*Zeug*) but a product divested (*entkleidete*) of its being-as-product. Being-thing then consists in what still remains (*was noch übrigbleibt*). But this remainder (*Rest*) is not properly (*eigens*) determined in itself… .'

and what if the *Überfall* had the structure of the *parergon*? The violent superimposition which falls aggressively upon the thing, the 'insult' as the French translator says for the *Überfall*, strangely but not without pertinence, which enslaves it and, literally, conjugates it, under matter/form – is this superimposition the contingency of a case, the fall of an accident, or a necessity which remains to be examined? And what if, like the *parergon*, it were neither the one nor the other? And what if the *remainder* could never, in its structure as remainder, be determined 'properly,' what if we must no longer even expect or question anything within that horizon

the word *parergon* intervenes, precisely (paragraphs 13 and 24) at the moment when Kant has just distinguished between *material* and *formal* judgments, the latter alone constituting judgments of taste in the proper sense. It is not, of course, a matter of a formalist aesthetic (we could show,

from another point of view, that it is the contrary) but of formality as the space of aesthetics in general, of a 'formalism' which, instead of representing a determinate system, merges with the history of art and with aesthetics itself. And the formality-effect is always tied to the possibility of a framing system that is both imposed and erased.

The question of the frame is already framed when it appears at a certain detour of the *Critique*.

Why framed?

The 'Clarification by Examples' (paragraph 14) belongs to the 'Analytic of the Beautiful,' book 1 of the 'Analytic of Aesthetic Judgment.' This analytic of the beautiful comprises four parts, four sides, four moments. The judgment of taste is examined from four sides: (1) according to *quality*; (2) according to *quantity*; (3) according to the *relation of the ends* (the *parergon* finds its lodgings here); (4) according to *modality*. The definition of the beautiful according to quality is the object of a disinterested *Wohlgefallen*; according to quantity, what pleases universally without concept; according to the relation of ends, the form of finality without the representation of an end (finality without end[9]); according to modality, that which is recognized without concept as the object of a necessary *Wohlgefallen*.

Such is the categorial frame of the analytic of the beautiful. Now where does this frame come from? Who supplies it? Who constructs it? Where is it imported from?

From the analytic of concepts in the *Critique of Pure* [speculative] *Reason*. A brief reminder: this analytic of concepts is one of the two parts of the transcendental analytic (transcendental analytic and dialectic, a division reproduced in the third *Critique*: analytic and dialectic of aesthetic judgment). The transcendental analytic comprises an analytic of concepts and an analytic of principles. The former breaks down the power of understanding in order to recognize in it the possibility of a priori concepts in their 'country of birth,' namely the understanding, where they lie dormant and in reserve. Since (receptive) intuition alone relates immediately to the object, the understanding does so by the intermediary, precisely, of judgments. Judgment is the mediate knowledge of an object. And we can 'refer all the acts of the understanding back to judgments, in such a way that the understanding in general can be represented as a power to judge (*Urteilskraft*).' The power to think as power to judge. One will thus find the functions of the understanding by determining the functions of unity in judgment. Concepts relate, as predicates of possible judgments, to the representation of an object. Consequently, by considering the simple form of the understanding, by abstracting the content of judgments, one can establish the list of the forms of judgment under *four* headings and twelve moments (four times three: the four-times-three also constructs the table (*Tafel*) of the superior faculties at the end of the introduction to the third *Critique*. Kant replies, in a note, to those who object to his 'tripartite' (*dreiteilig*) divisions and to his taste for 'trichotomy'; and the *three* + *one* informs the relationship of the faculties required by the fine arts – imagination, understanding, soul – with taste: 'the first three faculties are united only thanks to the fourth,' affirms the note to paragraph 50): *quantity* of the judgments (universal, particular, singular), *quality* (affirmative, negative, indefinite), *relation* (categorical, hypothetical, disjunctive), *modality* (problematic, assertoric, apodeictic). *Table of twelve*. Now there are as many pure concepts of the understanding, originary and nonderivable concepts, as there are logical functions in judgments. Whence the deduction of the table of categories (against the so-called grammatical empiricism of Aristotle) from the table of judgments.

Kant thus imports this table, this tableau (*Tafel*), this *board*,[10] this *border* into the analytic of aesthetic judgment. This is a legitimate operation since it is a question of judgments. But it is a transportation which is not without its problems and artful violence: a *logical* frame is transposed and forced in to be imposed on a *nonlogical* structure, a structure which no longer essentially concerns a relation to the object as object of knowledge. The aesthetic judgment, as Kant insists, is not a knowledge-judgment.

The frame fits badly. The difficulty can be felt from the first paragraph of the book, from the 'first moment of the judgment of taste considered from the point of view of quality.' 'The judgment of taste is aesthetic': in this single case, not foreseen by the analytic of concepts and judgments in the other *Critique*, the judgment is not a 'knowledge-judgment.' Hence it does not come under the transcendental logic whose *board* has been brought in.

The violence of the framing multiplies. It begins by enclosing the theory of the aesthetic in a theory of the beautiful, the latter in a theory of taste and the theory of taste in a theory of judgment. These are decisions which could be called external: the delimitation has enormous consequences, but a certain internal coherence can be saved at this cost. The same does not apply for another gesture of framing which, by introducing the *bord*, does violence to the inside of the system and twists its proper articulations out of shape. This must therefore be the gesture of primary interest to us if we are seeking a rigorously effective grip.

In the course of the final delimitation (theory of taste as theory of judgment), Kant *applies*, then, an analytic of logical judgments to an analytic of aesthetic judgments at the very moment that he is insisting on the irreducibility of the one kind to the other. He never justifies this framing, nor the constraint it artificially imposes on a discourse constantly threatened with overflowing [*débordement*]. In the first note to the first page, Kant says that the *logical* functions of judgment served him as a guide (*Anleitung*). This note touches on a difficulty so decisive that one cannot see why it does not constitute the principal text of which it forms the ground bass, that is, the unwritten or underwritten space, the supposed range of the harmonics. Here it is: 'The definition of taste which here serves as a foundation is the following: taste is the faculty of judging the beautiful. But what is then required in order to call an object beautiful must be discovered (*entdecken*) by the analysis of judgments of taste. I [intervention of the first person in a footnote] have looked for the moments (*Momente*) raised by this judgment in its reflection, taking as a guide the logical functions (for in judgments of taste there is still always (*immer noch*) a relation to the understanding). It is the moment of quality that I have examined first, because it is the one that the aesthetic judgment of the beautiful takes into consideration first.'

This note is to the title, 'First Moment of the Judgment of Taste Considered from the Point of View of Quality.' The note thus precedes, in a certain way, the text of the exposition, it is relatively detached from it. The same goes for the parenthesis it includes: '(for in judgments of taste there is still always (*immer noch*) a relation to the understanding).' This parenthesis (inserted in a note which is neither inside nor outside the exposition, neither inside nor outside its content) attempts to justify – and it is the only such attempt – the frame of the exposition, namely the analytic of judgment whose *bord* has been hastily imported at the opening of the exposition.

Before the note and its parenthesis (before, if one looks at the space of the page from bottom to top, but after if one keeps to the order of the exposition which places the note at the top of the page, at the place of its reference), another, briefer parenthesis forms a pocket in the supposedly 'main' text and is *invaginated* in it, in a sense: 'In order to distinguish whether or not a thing is beautiful, we do not relate the representation to the object by means of the understanding, with a view to knowledge, but to the subject and to its feeling of pleasure or unpleasure, by means of the imagination (united perhaps with the understanding, *vielleicht mit dem Verstande verbunden*).'

The two parentheses, *parerga* inside and outside the exposition, have the same object, the same finality: the justification (which is visibly very awkward) of the imported frame, of the analytic imposed – an ill-assured recourse, in order to get the table by and make the board fit – on a hypothetical 'liaison' with the understanding, to which the judgment of taste, although there is nothing logical about it, supposedly 'always still' has a relation.

Like an old liaison difficult to break off or a second-hand frame one is having trouble selling and that one wants to unload at any price.

The frame of this analytic of the beautiful, with its four moments, is thus furnished by the transcendental analytic, for the sole and bad reason that the imagination, the essential resource of the relation to beauty, is *perhaps* linked to the understanding, that there is perhaps and *still (vielleicht, noch*) some understanding in there. The relation to the understanding, which is neither certain nor essential, thus furnishes the frame of this whole discourse; and, within it, of the discourse on the frame. Without forcing things, but in any case in order to describe a certain forcing on Kant's part, we shall say that the whole frame of the analytic of the beautiful functions, with respect to that the content or internal structure of which is to be determined, like a *parergon*; it has all its characteristics: neither simply internal nor simply external, not falling to one side of the work as one could have said of an exergue, indispensable to *energeia* in order to liberate surplus value by enclosing labor (any market and first of all the picture market thus presupposes a process of framing: and an effective deconstructive labor cannot here do without a theory of the frame), it is called up and gathered together as a supplement from the lack – a certain 'internal' indetermination – in the very thing that it comes to frame. This lack, which cannot be determined, localized, situated, *arrested* inside or outside *before the framing*, is simultaneously – still using concepts which belong, precisely, to the classical logic of the frame, here to Kant's discourse – both *product* and *production* of the frame. If one applies to it the rule defined in the 'Clarification by Examples,' and if it becomes in its turn an example of what it allows us to consider as an example (frame described in the frame), then one can act as though the content of the analytic of judgment were a work of art, a picture whose frame, imported from the other *Critique*, would by virtue of its formal beauty play the role of *parergon*. And if it were simply an attractive, seductive, amusing exergue, not cooperating with what is proper to the work, a pure loss of value and waste of surplus value, then it would only be adornment. But it so happens that it is this analytic of judgment itself which, in its frame, allows us to define the requirement of formality, the opposition of the formal and the material, of the pure and the impure, of the proper and the improper, of the inside and the outside. It is the analytic which *determines* the frame as *parergon*, which both constitutes it and ruins it [*l'abîme*], makes it both hold (as that which causes to hold together, that which constitutes, mounts, inlays, sets, borders, gathers, trims – so many operations gathered together by the *Einfassung*) and collapse. A frame is essentially constructed and therefore fragile: such would be the essence or truth of the frame. If it had any. But this 'truth' can no longer be a 'truth,' it no more defines the transcendentality than it does the accidentality of the frame, merely its *parergonality*.

Philosophy wants to arraign it and can't manage. But what has produced and manipulated the frame puts everything to work in order to efface the frame effect, most often by naturalizing it to infinity, in the hands of God (one can verify this in Kant). Deconstruction must neither reframe nor dream of the pure and simple absence of the frame. These two apparently contradictory gestures are the very ones – and they are systematically indissociable – of *what* is here deconstructed.[11]

If the operations engaged and the criteria proposed by the analytic of the beautiful depend on this parergonality; if all the value oppositions which dominate the philosophy of art (before and since Kant) depend on it in their pertinence, their rigor, their purity, their propriety, then they are affected by this logic of the *parergon* which is more powerful than that of the analytic. One could follow in detail the consequences of this infectious affection. They cannot be local. The reflective operation which we have just allowed to make itself writing on the frame or have itself written on the frame (this is – writing/written on the frame):[12] a general law which is no longer a mechanical or teleological law of nature, of the accord or the harmony of the faculties (etc.), but a certain repeated dislocation, a regulated, irrepressible dislocation, which makes the frame in general crack, undoes it at the corners in its quoins and joints,[13] turns its internal limit

into an external limit, takes its thickness into account, makes us see the picture from the side of the canvas or the wood, etc.

To note only the first consequence of the initial forcing, see the end of the first note (another *parergon* which frames both the text and, within it as within itself, the parenthesis). Just as Kant cannot justify in all rigor the importation of the analytic of judgment, he cannot justify the *order* he follows in the application of the frame, of the four categories of the analytic of concepts. No more than with the transport of the table (*Tafel*), i.e., the frame, does the order of exposition here manage to rationalize its interest philosophically. Its motivation hides behind the arbitrariness of philosophical decree. The exposition begins with the group of the two *mathematical* categories (*quantity and quality*). Why not begin with the two *dynamic* categories (*relation and modality*)? And why invert the order of the mathematical categories themselves, as it was followed in the original exposition (quantity before quality)? This latter reversal is explained, to be sure, by the fact that knowledge is neither the end nor the effect of the judgment of taste: quantity (here, universality) is not the *first* value of a judgment of taste. End of the note: 'It is the moment of quality that I have examined first, because it is the one that the aesthetic judgment of the beautiful takes into consideration first.' Why first (*zuerst*)? The priority is not prescribed by the table, by the order of judgment, by the logic proper to the frame. Nothing in the (logical) analytic as such can account for this priority. Now if a reversal of the logical order takes place here for reasons which are not logical, why should it not continue? What is the rule or critical limit here?

Quality (the disinterested character) is the very thing that determines the formality of the beautiful object: it must be pure of all attraction, of all seductive power, it must provoke no emotion, promise no enjoyment. The *opposition* between the formal and the material, design and color (at least insofar as it is nonformal), composition and sound (at least insofar as it is nonformal), the formal *parergon* and the *parergon* for show or adornment, the opposition between the good and the bad *parergon* (which in itself is neither good nor bad) thus depends on the framing of this quality, of this frame effect called quality, value of value, and with which, violently, everything seems to begin. Position: opposition: frame.

Likewise, in the 'Clarification,' the discourse on sound and on color is held in the angle of the two mathematical categories (quality and quantity) even as the whole analytic of the beautiful is undoing, ceaselessly and as if without wanting to, the labor of the frame.

The frame labors [*travaille*] indeed. Place of labor, structurally bordered origin of surplus value, i.e., overflowed [*débordée*] on these two borders by what it overflows, it gives [*travaille*] indeed.[14] Like wood. It creaks and cracks, breaks down and dislocates even as it cooperates in the production of the product, overflows it and is deduc(t)ed from it. It never lets itself be simply exposed.

The analytic of the beautiful thus gives, ceaselessly undoes the labor of the frame to the extent that, while letting itself be squared up by the analytic of concepts and by the doctrine of judgment, it describes the absence of concept in the activity of taste. 'The beautiful is what is represented without concept as object of a universal *Wohlgefallen*.' This definition (second moment, category of quantity) derives from the qualitative definition (disinterestedness). The object of a disinterested pleasure does not depend on an empirical inclination, it therefore addresses itself to freedom and touches everyone – no matter who – where everyone can be touched. It is therefore universal. Now in explaining why this universality must be without concept, Kant exhibits in a sense the forcing – imposing an analytic of concepts on a process without concept – but he justifies his operation by an argument that one can consider to be the *constitution*, that which makes the whole edifice of the third *Critique* hold-together-and-stand-upright in the middle of its two great wings (the critique of aesthetic judgment and the critique of teleological judgment). This argument is *analogy*. It operates everywhere in the book, and one can systematically verify its effect. At the place where we are in the exposition – its crossroads

– it *gathers together* without-concept and concept, universality *without* concept and universality *with* concept, the *without* and the *with*; it thus legitimates the violence, the occupation of a nonconceptual field by the grid [*quadrillage*] of a conceptual force. Without and with at the same time (*ama*). By reason of its qualitative universality, the judgment of taste *resembles* the logical judgment which, nonetheless, it never is, in all rigor. The nonconceptual resembles the conceptual. A very strange resemblance, a singular proximity or affinity (*Ähnlichkeit*) which, somewhere (to be specified later),[15] draws out of *mimēsis* an interpretation of the beautiful which firmly rejects imitation. There is no contradiction here which is not reappropriated by the economy of *physis* as *mimēsis*.

He who takes a disinterested pleasure (without enjoyment and without concept) in the beautiful 'will speak of the beautiful as if (*als ob*) beauty were a quality (*Beschaffenheit*) of the object and the judgment logical (forming a cognition of the Object by concepts of it); although it is only aesthetic, and contains merely a reference (*Beziehung*) of the representation of the object to the Subject – because it still bears this resemblance [*Ähnlichkeit*: affinity, proximity, family tie] to the logical judgment, that it may be presupposed to be valid for all men. But this universality cannot spring from concepts. For from concepts there is no transition to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure (save in the case of pure practical laws, which, however, carry an interest with them; and such an interest does not attach to the pure judgment of taste)' [Meredith, 51].

The discourse on color and sound belongs to the 'Clarification by Examples,' in the course of the exposition of the third category: the dynamic category of finality. The judgment of taste relates to a purely formal finality, without concept and without end, without a conceptual and determinant representation of an end. The two mathematical categories are nonetheless indispensable: sound and color are excluded as *attractions* only to the extent of their nonformality, their materiality. As pure forms, sound and color can give rise to a universal appreciation, in conformity with the quantity of a judgment of taste; they can procure a disinterested pleasure, conforming to the quality of a judgment of taste. The sensations of sound and color can 'quite rightly' be held beautiful to the extent that they are 'pure': this determination of purity concerns only the form, which alone can be 'universally communicable with certainty.' According to Kant, there are two ways of acceding to formal purity: by a nonsensory, nonsensual reflection, and by the regular play of impressions, 'if one assumes with Euler' that colors are vibrations of the ether (*pulsus*) at regular intervals, and if (formal analogy between sounds and colors) sounds consist in a regular rhythm in the vibrations of the disturbed ether. Kant had a great deal of difficulty coming to a conclusion on this point. But the fact remains that on this hypothesis one would be dealing not with material contents of received sensations but with formal determinations. That is why simple color is pure color and can therefore belong inside the beautiful, giving rise to universally communicable appreciations. Mixed colors cannot do this. The empiricist motif (that simple color does not give rise to a transmissible perception) seems to have been inverted, but it is here not a question of determinant perception but only of pleasure or unpleasure.

This ambivalence of color (valorized as formal purity or as relation, devalorized as sensory matter, beauty on the one hand, attraction on the other, pure presence in both cases) is raised to the second power (squared) when it is a question of the color of the frame (*goldene Rahmen*, for example), when the parergonal equivocity of the color comes to intensify the parergonal equivocity of the frame. What would be the equivalent of this square for music

it will be said that not all frames are, or have been, or will be square, rectangular, or quadrangular figures, nor even simply angular. Tables and tableaux (*Tafel*) likewise not. This is true: a critical and systematic and typological history of framing seems possible and necessary.[16] But the angle in general, the quadrangular in particular will not be just one of its objects among others. Everything that is written here is valid for the logic of parergonal bordering *in general*, but the privilege of 'cadre' [*frame*], though it seems more fortunate in the Latin than in the Germanic languages, is not fortuitous

Kantian question: the relation of the concept to the nonconcept (up/down, left/right), to the body, to the signature which is placed 'on' the frame: in fact, sometimes; structurally, always. The prosthesis

which does not run along as though on wheels in the third *Critique* as soon as one looks a little more closely at the example, that example of an example which forms and is formed by the frame. If things run as though on wheels, this is perhaps because things aren't going so well, by reason of an internal infirmity in the thesis which demands to be supplemented by a prosthesis or only ensures the progress of the exposition with the aid of a wheelchair or a child's pushchair. Thus one pushes forward something which cannot stand up, does not erect itself by itself in its process. Framing always supports and contains that which, by itself, collapses forthwith, exc

this is demonstrated by example, by the problem of the example and the reflective judgment. Now what does the *Critique of Pure Reason* tell us? That examples are the wheelchairs [*roulettes*] of judgment. The French translators sometimes say the 'crutches' of judgment: but it really is wheelchairs (*Gängelwagen*), not skateboards [*planches-à-roulettes*] but the little wheeled cars in which children, the old, or the sick are pushed, those who have not enough judgment, enough good sense, that faculty of natural judgment, the best-shared thing (this is not the *sensus communis* of the third *Critique*) that is called – this is Kant's word – *Mutterwitz*. Those who do not have enough of this maternal *Witz*, the sick, imbeciles, need wheelchairs, examples. 'Examples are thus the wheelchairs of the faculty of judging (*Gängelwagen der Urteilskraft*) and those who lack (*mangelt*) this natural talent

will not be able to do without them.' The wheelchairs, however, do not replace judgment: nothing can replace the *Mutterwitz*, the lack of which cannot be supplied by any school (*dessen Mangel keine Schule ersetzen kann*). The exemplary wheelchairs are thus prostheses which replace nothing. But like all examples (*Beispielen*), as Hegel will have pointed out, they play, there is play in them, they give room to play. To the essence, beside the essence (*beiher*), Hegel goes on to make clear. Thus they can invert, unbalance, incline the natural movement into a parergonal movement, divert the energy of the *ergon*, introduce chance and the abyss into the necessity of the *Mutterwitz*: not a contrary order but an aleatory sidestep which can make one lose one's head suddenly, a Russian roulette if one puts into play pleasure without enjoyment, the death-drive and the mourning of labor in the experience of the beautiful

of the parergon – get one's mourning done. Like the entirely-other of hetero-affection, in the pleasure without enjoyment and without concept, it provokes and delimits the labor of mourning, labor *in general as* labor of mourning

le travail à parer[17]

reserve, savings, parsimony, stock – the self-protection *of* the work (*ergon*), energy captured, hemmed (the 'binding' (*Verbindung*) of energy, condition for the 'mastery' (*Herrschaft*) of the pleasure principle: the result 'is not simple' – to be continued)

the self-protection-*of*-the-work, of *energeia* which becomes *ergon* only as (from) *parergon*: not against free and full and pure and unfettered energy (pure act and total presence of *energeia*, the Aristotelian prime mover) but against what is *lacking* in it; not against the lack as a posable or opposable negative, a substantial emptiness, a determinable and bordered absence (still verifiable essence and presence) but against the impossibility of *arresting différance* in its contour, of arraigning the heterogeneous

(*différance*) in a pose, of localizing, even in a meta-empirical way, what metaphysics calls, as we have just seen, *lack*, of making it come back, equal or similar to itself (*adaequatio-homoiosis*), to its proper place, according to a proper trajectory, preferably circular (castration as truth). Although apparently opposed – or because opposed – these two *bordering* determinations of what the parergon is working against (the operation of free energy and of pure productivity or the operation of the essential lack) are *the same* (metaphysical).[18]

that which is outside the frame (putting-into-lethargy and absolute value of the frame): naturalization of the frame. There is no natural frame. *There is* frame, but the frame *does not exist*.

The parergon – apotrope (decoration, show, parry) *of the* primary processes, of free energy, i.e., of the 'theoretical fiction' (*Ein psychischer Apparat, der nur den Primärvorgang besässe, existiert zwar unseres Wissens nicht und ist insoferne eine theoretische Fiktion*). So only a certain practice of theoretical fiction can work (against) the frame, (make or let it) play (it) (against) itself. Don't forget, nonetheless, that the *content*, the *object* of this theoretical fiction (the free energy of the originary process, its pure productivity) is metaphysics, onto-theology itself. The practice of fiction always runs the risk of believing in it or having us believe in it. The *practice* of fiction must therefore guard against having metaphysical truth palmed off on it once again under the label of fiction. There is fiction and fiction. Necessity here of the angle – diagonality – where things work and play and give, and of showing up the remnants of the angle in round frames (there are such things). Hegel: spirit linked to the appearance of the round form

everything will flower at the edge of a deconsecrated tomb: the flower with free or vague beauty (*pulchritudo vaga*) and not adherent beauty (*pulchritudo adhaerens*). It will be, for (arbitrary) example, a colorless and scentless tulip (more surely than color, scent is lost to art and to the beautiful (paragraph 53): just try to frame a perfume) which Kant doubtless did not pick in Holland but in the book of a certain Saussure whom he read frequently at the time. 'But a flower, *zum Beispiel eine Tulpe*, is held to be beautiful because in perceiving it one encounters a finality which, judged as we judge it, does not relate to any end'

even

Translated by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod

Notes

1 *Relève*, from the verb *relever* (to stand up again, to raise, to relieve), is also Derrida's translation of Hegel's *Aufhebung*.

2 'I please myself' here *not* in the sense 'I do as I like.'

3 'Economimesis,' in *Mimesis* [*des articulations*] (in collaboration with S. Agacinski, S. Kofman, Ph. Lacoue-Labarthe, J.-L. Nancy, B. Pautrat). In the collection 'La Philosophie en effet', Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1975 [pp. 55–93; English translation in *Diacritics* 11, no. 2, 1981, pp. 3–25]. – J.D.

4 *Partition* here also has the meaning of 'musical score.'

5 'Finality' translates *finalité*, the received French translation of Kant's *Zweckmässigkeit*, traditionally rendered into English as 'purposiveness.' See below, n. 9.

6 'Hinge' translates *brisure*, which carries connotations of both breaking and joining; see *De la grammatologie*, Paris: Minuit, 1967, p. 96; translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak as *of Grammatology*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, pp. 65ff.

7 Perhaps referring to hackneyed examples of rhetorical figures, such as 'forty sails' for 'forty ships' in Dumarsais, Fontanier, etc. But *bateau* used adjectivally also *means* 'hackneyed.'

8 *Quadrillée* insists on the 'squareness' implied in *cadre* (see also p. 564), but it also carries an important sense of coverage, control, surveillance.

9 We have preferred to translate Derrida's 'finalité sans fin' literally as 'finality without end,' rather than revert to the standard 'purposiveness without purpose': this allows us to preserve a certain sense of Derrida's exploitation of different senses of the word *fin* ('end'), and to avoid certain traditional assumptions about Kant which Derrida's essay suspends at the very least. 'Purpose' would be more suitable for *but*, but we have tended to translate this as 'goal' to avoid confusion.

10 In English in the text.

11 'De *ce qui* se deconstruit': the French pronominal verb retains both passive and reflexive values.

12 'Ceci est – écrit sur le cadre': *écrit* can also be 'a piece of writing.'

13 'L'abîme en coin dans ses angles et ses articulations': the translation loses a certain sense of slyness; cf. 'un regard en coin,' a sideways glance. Use of the idiom 'on the side' would interfere too much with the insistence on corners.

14 This sense of the verb *travailler* (i.e., to give or warp, of wood or metal) communicates with an important sense of *jouer* (literally 'to play,' but also 'to give' in the sense of there being 'play' or 'give' in a steering wheel, for example); see here p. 566.

15 Cf. 'Economimesis.' – J.D.

16 When 'Parergon' was first published, I had not yet read Meyer Schapiro, 'Sur quelques problèmes de sémiotique de l'art visuel: champ et véhicule dans les signes iconiques,' translated into French by Jean-Claude Lebensztejn, *Critique*, nos 15–16 [1973, pp. 843–66; originally published in *Semiotica* 1, no. 3, 1969, pp. 223–42].

The reader will find more than one indication concerning the 'history' of framing, its 'late invention,' the not very 'natural' character of the 'rectangular frame,' as well as 'the frame that bends and turns inward into the field of the picture to compress or entangle the figures (the trumeau of Souillac, the Imago Hominis in the Echternach Gospels …)' (p. 228).

I also refer, as goes without saying, to *all* of Lebensztejn's publications. – J.D.

17 This syntagm is untranslatable as it stands: depending on the sequence into which it was inserted, it could mean, '(the) work to adorn,' '(the) work to parry,' '(the) work to be adorned,' '(the) work to be parried,' etc.

18 '*Le même* (metaphysique)': also, 'the (metaphysical) same,' 'the same (metaphysics).'

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Jacques Derrida in English

Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs (1967), trans. D.B. Allinson, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973.
Of Grammatology (1967), trans. G. Spivak, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
Writing and Difference (1967), trans. A. Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.
Margins of Philosophy (1972), trans. A. Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
Positions (1972), trans. A. Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
Dissemination (1972), trans. B. Johnson, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
Glas (1974), trans. J.P. Leavey Jr. and R. Rand, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.
Limited Inc. (1977), Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988.
The Truth in Painting (1978), trans. G. Bennington and I. McLeod, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles (1978), trans. B. Harlow, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond (1980), trans. A. Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation (1982), trans. P. Kamuf, New York: Schocken, 1985.
Memoirs for Paul de Man, trans. C. Lindsay, J. Culler, and E. Cadava, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.
Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question (1987), trans. G. Bennington and R. Bowlby, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy (1990), trans. M. Hobson, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money (1991), trans. P. Kamuf, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins, trans. P.-A. Brault and M. Naas, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
Spectres of Marx (1993), trans. P. Kamuf, London: Routledge, 1994.
On the Name (1993), ed. T. Dutoit, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. Includes the booklets: *Passions*, *Sauf le nom*, and *Khōra*.
Aporias, trans. T. Dutoit, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.
Politics of Friendship (1994), trans. G. Collins, London: Verso, 1997.
Religion (1996), ed. with G. Vattimo, trans. S. Weber, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas (1997), trans. M. Naas and P.-A. Brault, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
On Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond (1997), trans. R. Bowlby, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
The Instant of My Death; Demeure: Fiction and Testimony (with M. Blanchot), trans. E. Rottenberg, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
On Touching – Jean-Luc Nancy (2000), trans. C. Irizarry, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.
Paper Machine (2001), trans. R. Bowlby, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.
Rogues: Two Essays on Reason (2003), trans. P.-A. Brault and M. Naas, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.
The Animal That Therefore I Am (2006), trans. M.-L. Mallet and D. Wills, New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.
The Beast and the Sovereign, Vol. 1 (2008), trans. G. Bennington, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
The Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds, ed. P. Kamuf, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.
Acts of Literature, ed. D. Attridge, London: Routledge, 1992.
Points: Interviews, 1974–1994, ed. E. Weber, trans. P. Kamuf *et al.*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.
Copy, Archive, Signature: A Conversation on Photography, ed. G. Richter, trans. J. Fort, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.

Further reading

Detailed introductions to Derrida are provided by Lawlor (2006), Lucy (2004), Norris (1987), Richards (2008), Royle (2003), and Stocker (2006). For a selection of critical essays covering different aspects of Derrida's thought, see Cohen (2002) and Reynolds and Roffe (2004).

The relation between philosophy and literature is considered by Gaston (2009), Glendinning and Eaglestone (2008), Hartman (1982), Mahon (2007), Redfield (2007), and Van der Heiden (2009), with Cazeaux (2007), Ricoeur (1978), and Stellardi (2000) focusing on metaphor and philosophy.

A range of themes within aesthetics is addressed by Carroll (1987), Escoubas (2006), Fried (1994), Ross (2001), Wigley (1995), and Wills (2006). Derrida on memory is explored by Krell (2000). The significance of the French language to Derrida's thought is examined by Hobson (1998). For studies of Derrida's later work, see Mitchell and Davidson (2007), whose collection includes an essay from Hélène Cixous (2007), and Rapaport (2003).

D. Carroll, *Paraesthetics: Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida*, New York: Methuen, 1987.
C. Cazeaux, *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy: From Kant to Derrida*, New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 175–98.
H. Cixous, 'Jacques Derrida as a Proteus unbound', *Critical Inquiry*, 2007, vol. 33, pp. 389–423. Special edition of the journal, entitled *The Late Derrida*, eds W.J.T. Mitchell and A.I. Davidson.
T. Cohen (ed.), *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
E. Escoubas, 'Derrida and the truth of drawing: another Copernican revolution?', *Research in Phenomenology*, 2006, vol. 36, pp. 201–14.
M. Fried, 'Between realisms: from Derrida to Manet', *Critical Inquiry*, 1994, vol. 21, pp. 1–36.
S. Gaston, *Derrida, Literature, and War: Absence and the Chance of Meeting*, London: Continuum, 2009.
S. Glendinning and R. Eaglestone (eds), *Derrida's Legacies: Literature and Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 2008.
G. Hartman, *Saving the Text: Literature/Derrida/Philosophy*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.
M. Hobson, *Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines*, London: Routledge, 1998.
D.F. Krell, *The Purest of Bastards: Works of Mourning, Art, and Affirmation in the Thought of Jacques Derrida*, University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000.
L. Lawlor, 'Jacques Derrida', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2006. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/derrida/ (accessed 25 May 2010).
N. Lucy, *A Derrida Dictionary*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
M. Mahon, *Imagining Joyce and Derrida: Between Finnegan's Wake and Glas*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.
W.J.T. Mitchell and A.I. Davidson (eds), *The Late Derrida*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
C. Norris, *Derrida*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987.
H. Rapaport, *Later Derrida: Reading the Recent Work*, New York: Routledge, 2003.
M. Redfield, 'Aesthetics, theory, and the profession of literature: Derrida and romanticism', *Studies in Romanticism*, 2007, vol. 46, pp. 227–46.
J. Reynolds and J. Roffe (eds), *Understanding Derrida*, London: Continuum, 2004.
K.M. Richards, *Derrida Reframed: A Guide for the Arts Student*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2008.
P. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. R. Czerny, K. McLaughlin, and J. Costello, London: Routledge, 1978, pp. 283–84.
A. Ross, 'Errant beauty: Derrida and Kant on "aesthetic presentation"', *International Studies in Philosophy*, 2001, vol. 33, pp. 87–104.
N. Royle, *Jacques Derrida*, London: Routledge, 2003.
G. Stellardi, *Heidegger and Derrida on Philosophy and Metaphor: Imperfect Thought*, New York: Prometheus Books, 2000.
B. Stocker, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Derrida on Deconstruction*, London: Routledge, 2006.
G.-J. Van der Heiden, 'The poetic experience of language and the task of thinking: Derrida on Celan', *Philosophy Today*, 2009, vol. 53, pp. 115–25.
M. Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995.
D. Wills, 'Notes towards a requiem: or the music of memory', *Mosaic*, 2006, vol. 39, pp. 27–46.

Chapter 32

PAUL DE MAN

INTRODUCTION

The 'resistance' in de Man's (1919–83) essay 'The Resistance to Theory' (1982) refers both to the opposition literary theory receives from other traditional studies, such as literary history and criticism, and to the oppositions generated within theory itself by its emphasis on rhetoric. Literary theory begins, for de Man, when the role of language in literature is made problematic. Traditional literary history and criticism (within which he includes aesthetics) takes language for granted, and interprets texts either in terms of non-linguistic effects, e.g. tone, organic form, allusion, historical situation, or as pure, self-referential verbalism, answerable to nothing but itself. In contrast, theory brings the recognition that 'language is fiction not because it somehow refuses to acknowledge "reality", but because it is not a priori certain that language functions according to principles which are those, or which are *like* those, of the phenomenal world'. Structuralism draws attention to the thickness of language, de Man observes, but the tensions are already present in the *trivium*: the classical division of the science of language into logic, grammar, and rhetoric. While the links between logic and grammar have been well established, rhetoric remains an 'unsettling' element, 'disrupting the inner balance of the model'. When we speak rhetorically, we employ figures of speech or tropes and these, de Man asserts, 'pertain primordially to language': 'they are text-producing functions that are not necessarily patterned on a non-verbal [worldly] entity, whereas grammar is by definition capable of extra-linguistic generalization'. The theoretical exposition of a text thus throws up resistance because it requires the reader to negotiate, if not enjoy, the suasions and indeterminacies of language which an otherwise univocal, 'grammatical' account suppresses.

De Man's arguments apply not just to the study of literature but to all texts, in the broadest sense of 'forms of cultural representation'. This is for two reasons. First, 'theory' is now a cross-disciplinary activity. Rhetoric disrupts established distinctions, including divisions between subject areas. The term on its own has become the by-word in most Anglo-American humanities departments for the form of analysis which views the text – literary, philosophical, cultural – as an autonomous site of potentially transgressive signification. Second, literariness, for de Man, does not apply to a particular canon or institution but to an awareness of representation as something active in its own right, and an appreciation of the dangers of accepting any form of representation as a given, reliable means of accessing the world.

Is it the case that deconstruction only applies to literary or verbal texts? The Heideggerian component of necessity, which maintains that we are bound to *conceptuality* and all the slippages it incurs, would seem to suggest so. Can we be tied to certain forms of visual representation in the same way that we are tied to certain conceptual distinctions? Are revolutions in art and design comparable to paradigm shifts in thought? There are, I suggest, good grounds for entertaining

the possibility of a broader, aesthetic deconstruction. Architecture is a good example. If deconstruction is a realization of the way in which language as rhetoric and figuration exceeds and undermines direction, then, I propose, deconstructive moments in architecture might be when we are made to slow down in our passage through a space because the building is allowing the 'metaphorical' properties of matter to suggest possibilities over and above 'the shortest possible route'. Deconstruction contributes to postmodernism: awareness of how the necessity of form enables yet impedes movement inclines us to dwell upon the constructed, contingent aspects of our being. However, although a fair amount has been written on deconstructionist architecture, Derrida is not entirely convinced by the concept. In an interview with Eva Meyer, entitled 'Architecture Where the Desire May Live', Derrida admits that he can find no real connection between his philosophy and deconstructionist architecture other than a metaphorical one.[1] This in itself though is an important connection.

In visual art, any work which problematizes yet reinvokes a particular form of representation could be considered a deconstructive performance on the grounds that it carries the appearance of application while also elevating aspects which are novel yet disruptive. Paintings which borrow other forms of representation, such as photorealism, pop art, the diagrammatic works of, for example, Patrick Caulfield and Michael Craig-Martin, acknowledge an origin, problematize it out of context, but bring new properties to it. Borrowing like this makes the work overtly metaphorical, since it performs the metaphorical structure of comparison (between original and new contexts) which creates multiple meanings. The ready-made is therefore a good contender for deconstructive art since it requires a split-focus: the object's original use is displayed and undermined and, as a result, transformed through its relocation in the gallery.[2]

Notes

1 J. Derrida, 'Architecture where the desire may live', *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. N. Leach, London: Routledge, 1997, pp. 319–23.

2 Danto argues convincingly for the metaphorical status of the ready-made. See A. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981, pp. 165–208.

■ ■ ■

THE RESISTANCE TO THEORY

PAUL DE MAN

This essay was not originally intended to address the question of teaching directly, although it was supposed to have a didactic and an educational function – which it failed to achieve. It was written at the request of the Committee on the Research Activities of the Modern Language Association as a contribution to a collective volume entitled *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*. I was asked to write the section on literary theory. Such essays are expected to follow a clearly determined program: they are supposed to provide the reader with a select but comprehensive list of the main trends and publications in the field, to synthesize and classify the main problematic areas and to lay out a critical and programmatic projection of the solutions which can be expected in the foreseeable future. All this with a keen awareness that, ten years later, someone will be asked to repeat the same exercise.

I found it difficult to live up, in minimal good faith, to the requirements of this program and could only try to explain, as concisely as possible, why the main theoretical interest of literary

theory consists in the impossibility of its definition. The Committee rightly judged that this was an inauspicious way to achieve the pedagogical objectives of the volume and commissioned another article. I thought their decision altogether justified, as well as interesting in its implications for the teaching of literature.

I tell this for two reasons. First, to explain the traces in the article of the original assignment which account for the awkwardness of trying to be more retrospective and more general than one can legitimately hope to be. But secondly, because the predicament also reveals a question of general interest: that of the relationship between the scholarship (the key word in the title of the MLA volume), the theory, and the teaching of literature.

Overfacile opinion notwithstanding, teaching is not primarily an intersubjective relationship between people but a cognitive process in which self and other are only tangentially and contiguously involved. The only teaching worthy of the name is scholarly, not personal; analogies between teaching and various aspects of show business or guidance counselling are more often than not excuses for having abdicated the task. Scholarship has, in principle, to be eminently teachable. In the case of literature, such scholarship involves at least two complementary areas: historical and philological facts as the preparatory condition for understanding, and methods of reading or interpretation. The latter is admittedly an open discipline, which can, however, hope to evolve by rational means, despite internal crises, controversies and polemics. As a controlled reflection on the formation of method, theory rightly proves to be entirely compatible with teaching, and one can think of numerous important theoreticians who are or were also prominent scholars. A question arises only if a tension develops between methods and the knowledge which those methods allow one to reach. If there is indeed something about literature, as such, which allows for a discrepancy between truth and method, between *Wahrheit* and *Methode*, then scholarship and theory are no longer necessarily compatible; as a first casualty of this complication, the notion of 'literature as such' as well as the clear distinction between history and interpretation can no longer be taken for granted. For a method that cannot be made to suit the 'truth' of its object can only teach delusion. Various developments, not only in the contemporary scene but in the long and complicated history of literary and linguistic instruction, reveal symptoms that suggest that such a difficulty is an inherent focus of the discourse about literature. These uncertainties are manifest in the hostility directed at theory in the name of ethical and aesthetic values, as well as in the recuperative attempts of theoreticians to reassert their own subservience to these values. The most effective of these attacks will denounce theory as an obstacle to scholarship and, consequently, to teaching. It is worth examining whether, and why, this is the case. For if this is indeed so, then it is better to fail in teaching what should not be taught than to succeed in teaching what is not true.

A general statement about literary theory should not, in theory, start from pragmatic considerations. It should address such questions as the definition of literature (what is literature?) and discuss the distinction between literary and non-literary uses of language, as well as between literary and non-verbal forms of art. It should then proceed to the descriptive taxonomy of the various aspects and species of the literary genus and to the normative rules that are bound to follow from such a classification. Or, if one rejects a scholastic for a phenomenological model, one should attempt a phenomenology of the literary activity as writing, reading or both, or of the literary work as the product, the correlate of such an activity. Whatever the approach taken (and several other theoretically justifiable starting-points can be imagined) it is certain that considerable difficulties will arise at once, difficulties that cut so deep that even the most elementary task of scholarship, the delimitation of the corpus and the *état présent* of the question, is bound to end in confusion, not necessarily because the bibliography is so large but because it is impossible to fix

its borderlines. Such predictable difficulties have not prevented many writers on literature from proceeding along theoretical rather than pragmatic lines, often with considerable success. It can be shown however that, in all cases, this success depends on the power of a system (philosophical, religious or ideological) that may well remain implicit but that determines an a priori conception of what is 'literary' by starting out from the premises of the system rather than from the literary thing itself – if such a 'thing' indeed exists. This last qualification is of course a real question which in fact accounts for the predictability of the difficulties just alluded to: if the condition of existence of an entity is itself particularly critical, then the theory of this entity is bound to fall back into the pragmatic. The difficult and inconclusive history of literary theory indicates that this is indeed the case for literature in an even more manifest manner than for other verbalized occurrences such as jokes, for example, or even dreams. The attempt to treat literature theoretically may as well resign itself to the fact that it has to start out from empirical considerations.

Pragmatically speaking, then, we know that there has been, over the last fifteen to twenty years, a strong interest in something called literary theory and that, in the United States, this interest has at times coincided with the importation and reception of foreign, mostly but not always continental influences. We also know that this wave of interest now seems to be receding as some satiation or disappointment sets in after the initial enthusiasm. Such an ebb and flow is natural enough, but it remains interesting, in this case, because it makes the depth of the resistance to literary theory so manifest. It is a recurrent strategy of any anxiety to defuse what it considers threatening by magnification or minimization, by attributing to it claims to power of which it is bound to fall short. If a cat is called a tiger it can easily be dismissed as a paper tiger; the question remains however why one was so scared of the cat in the first place. The same tactic works in reverse: calling the cat a mouse and then deriding it for its pretence to be mighty. Rather than being drawn into this polemical whirlpool, it might be better to try to call the cat a cat and to document, however briefly, the contemporary version of the resistance to theory in this country.

The predominant trends in North American literary criticism, before the 1960s, were certainly not averse to theory, if by theory one understands the rooting of literary exegesis and of critical evaluation in a system of some conceptual generality. Even the most intuitive, empirical and theoretically low-key writers on literature made use of a minimal set of concepts (tone, organic form, allusion, tradition, historical situation, etc.) of at least some general import. In several other cases, the interest in theory was publicly asserted and practised. A broadly shared methodology, more or less overtly proclaimed, links together such influential text books of the era as *Understanding Poetry* (Brooks and Warren), *Theory of Literature* (Wellek and Warren) and *The Fields of Light* (Reuben Brower) or such theoretically oriented works as *The Mirror and the Lamp*, *Language as Gesture*, and *The Verbal Icon*.

Yet, with the possible exception of Kenneth Burke and, in some respects, Northrop Frye, none of these authors would have considered themselves theoreticians in the post-1960 sense of the term, nor did their work provoke as strong reactions, positive or negative, as that of later theoreticians. There were polemics, no doubt, and differences in approach that cover a wide spectrum of divergencies, yet the fundamental curriculum of literary studies as well as the talent and training expected for them were not being seriously challenged. New Critical approaches experienced no difficulty fitting into the academic establishments without their practitioners having to betray their literary sensibilities in any way; several of its representatives pursued successful parallel careers as poets or novelists next to their academic functions. Nor did they experience difficulties with regard to a national tradition which, though certainly less tyrannical than its European counterparts, is nevertheless far from powerless. The perfect embodiment of the New Criticism remains, in many respects, the personality and the ideology of T.S. Eliot, a

combination of original talent, traditional learning, verbal wit and moral earnestness, an Anglo-American blend of intellectual gentility not so repressed as not to afford tantalizing glimpses of darker psychic and political depths, but without breaking the surface of an ambivalent decorum that has its own complacencies and seductions. The normative principles of such a literary ambiance are cultural and ideological rather than theoretical, oriented towards the integrity of a social and historical self rather than towards the impersonal consistency that theory requires. Culture allows for, indeed advocates, a degree of cosmopolitanism, and the literary spirit of the American Academy of the fifties was anything but provincial. It had no difficulty appreciating and assimilating outstanding products of a kindred spirit that originated in Europe: Curtius, Auerbach, Croce, Spitzer, Alonso, Valéry and also, with the exception of some of his works, J.P. Sartre. The inclusion of Sartre in this list is important, for it indicates that the dominant cultural code we are trying to evoke cannot simply be assimilated to a political polarity of the left and the right, of the academic and the non-academic, of Greenwich Village and Gambier, Ohio. Politically oriented and predominantly non-academic journals, of which the *Partisan Review* of the fifties remains the best example, did not (after due allowance is made for all proper reservations and distinctions) stand in any genuine opposition to the New Critical approaches. The broad, though negative, consensus that brings these extremely diverse trends and individuals together is their shared resistance to theory. This diagnosis is borne out by the arguments and complicities that have since come to light in a more articulate opposition to the common opponent.

The interest of these considerations would be at most anecdotal (the historical impact of twentieth-century literary discussion being so slight) if it were not for the theoretical implications of the resistance to theory. The local manifestations of this resistance are themselves systematic enough to warrant one's interest.

What is it that is being threatened by the approaches to literature that developed during the sixties and that now, under a variety of designations, make up the ill-defined and somewhat chaotic field of literary theory? These approaches cannot be simply equated with any particular method or country. Structuralism was not the only trend to dominate the stage, not even in France, and structuralism as well as semiology are inseparable from prior tendencies in the Slavic domain. In Germany, the main impulses have come from other directions, from the Frankfurt School and more orthodox Marxists, from post-Husserlian phenomenology and post-Heideggerian hermeneutics, with only minor inroads made by structural analysis. All these trends have had their share of influence in the United States, in more or less productive combinations with nationally rooted concerns. Only a nationally or personally competitive view of history would wish to hierarchize such hard-to-label movements. The possibility of doing literary theory, which is by no means to be taken for granted, has itself become a consciously reflected-upon question and those who have progressed furthest in this question are the most controversial but also the best sources of information. This certainly includes several of the names loosely connected with structuralism, broadly enough defined to include Saussure, Jakobson and Barthes as well as Greimas and Althusser, that is to say, so broadly defined as to be no longer of use as a meaningful historical term.

Literary theory can be said to come into being when the approach to literary texts is no longer based on non-linguistic, that is to say historical and aesthetic, considerations or, to put it somewhat less crudely, when the object of discussion is no longer the meaning or the value but the modalities of production and of reception of meaning and of value prior to their establishment – the implication being that this establishment is problematic enough to require an autonomous discipline of critical investigation to consider its possibility and its status. Literary history, even when considered at furthest remove from the platitudes of positivistic historicism, is still the history of an understanding of which the possibility is taken for granted. The question of the

relationship between aesthetics and meaning is more complex, since aesthetics apparently has to do with the *effect* of meaning rather than with its content *per se*. But aesthetics is in fact, ever since its development just before and with Kant, a phenomenalism of a process of meaning and understanding, and it may be naive in that it postulates (as its name indicates) a phenomenology of art and of literature which may well be what is at issue. Aesthetics is part of a universal system of philosophy rather than a specific theory. In the nineteenth-century philosophical tradition, Nietzsche's challenge of the system erected by Kant, Hegel and their successors, is a version of the general question of philosophy. Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics includes, or starts out from, the aesthetic, and the same could be argued for Heidegger. The invocation of prestigious philosophical names does not intimate that the present-day development of literary theory is a by-product of larger philosophical speculations. In some rare cases, a direct link may exist between philosophy and literary theory. More frequently, however, contemporary literary theory is a relatively autonomous version of questions that also surface, in a different context, in philosophy, though not necessarily in a clearer and more rigorous form. Philosophy, in England as well as on the Continent, is less freed from traditional patterns than it sometimes pretends to believe and the prominent, though never dominant, place of aesthetics among the main components of the system is a constitutive part of this system. It is therefore not surprising that contemporary literary theory came into being from outside philosophy and sometimes in conscious rebellion against the weight of its tradition. Literary theory may now well have become a legitimate concern of philosophy but it cannot be assimilated to it, either factually or theoretically. It contains a necessarily pragmatic moment that certainly weakens it as theory but that adds a subversive element of unpredictability and makes it something of a wild card in the serious game of the theoretical disciplines.

The advent of theory, the break that is now so often being deplored and that sets it aside from literary history and from literary criticism, occurs with the introduction of linguistic terminology in the metalanguage about literature. By linguistic terminology is meant a terminology that designates reference prior to designating the referent and takes into account, in the consideration of the world, the referential function of language or, to be somewhat more specific, that considers reference as a function of language and not necessarily as an intuition. Intuition implies perception, consciousness, experience, and leads at once into the world of logic and of understanding with all its correlatives, among which aesthetics occupies a prominent place. The assumption that there can be a science of language which is not necessarily a logic leads to the development of a terminology which is not necessarily aesthetic. Contemporary literary theory comes into its own in such events as the application of Saussurian linguistics to literary texts.

The affinity between structural linguistics and literary texts is not as obvious as, with the hindsight of history, it now may seem. Peirce, Saussure, Sapir and Bloomfield were not originally concerned with literature at all but with the scientific foundations of linguistics. But the interest of philologists such as Roman Jakobson or literary critics such as Roland Barthes in semiology reveals the natural attraction of literature to a theory of linguistic signs. By considering language as a system of signs and of signification rather than as an established pattern of meanings, one displaces or even suspends the traditional barriers between literary and presumably non-literary uses of language and liberates the corpus from the secular weight of textual canonization. The results of the encounter between semiology and literature went considerably further than those of many other theoretical models – philological, psychological or classically epistemological – which writers on literature in quest of such models had tried out before. The responsiveness of literary texts to semiotic analysis is visible in that, whereas other approaches were unable to reach beyond observations that could be paraphrased or translated in terms of common knowledge, these analyses revealed patterns that

could only be described in terms of their own, specifically linguistic, aspects. The linguistics of semiology and of literature apparently have something in common that only their shared perspective can detect and that pertains distinctively to them. The definition of this something, often referred to as literariness, has become the object of literary theory.

Literariness, however, is often misunderstood in a way that has provoked much of the confusion which dominates today's polemics. It is frequently assumed, for instance, that literariness is another word for, or another mode of, aesthetic response. The use, in conjunction with literariness, of such terms as style and stylistics, form or even 'poetry' (as in 'the poetry of grammar'), all of which carry strong aesthetic connotations, helps to foster this confusion, even among those who first put the term in circulation. Roland Barthes, for example, in an essay properly and revealingly dedicated to Roman Jakobson, speaks eloquently of the writer's quest for a perfect coincidence of the phonic properties of a word with its signifying function.

> We would also wish to insist on the Cratylism of the name (and of the sign) in Proust … Proust sees the relationship between signifier and signified as motivated, the one copying the other and representing in its material form the signified essence of the thing (and not the thing itself) … This realism (in the scholastic sense of the word), which conceives of names as the 'copy' of the ideas, has taken, in Proust, a radical form. But one may well ask whether it is not more or less consciously present in all writing and whether it is possible to be a writer without some sort of belief in the natural relationship between names and essences. The poetic function, in the widest sense of the word, would thus be defined by a Cratylian awareness of the sign, and the writer would be the conveyor of this secular myth which wants language to imitate the idea and which, contrary to the teachings of linguistic science, thinks of signs as motivated signs.[1]

To the extent that Cratylism assumes a convergence of the phenomenal aspects of language, as sound, with its signifying function as referent, it is an aesthetically oriented conception; one could, in fact, without distortion, consider aesthetic theory, including its most systematic formulation in Hegel, as the complete unfolding of the model of which the Cratylian conception of language is a version. Hegel's somewhat cryptic reference to Plato, in the *Aesthetics*, may well be interpreted in this sense. Barthes and Jakobson often seem to invite a purely aesthetic reading, yet there is a part of their statement that moves in the opposite direction. For the convergence of sound and meaning celebrated by Barthes in Proust and, as Gérard Genette has decisively shown,[2] later dismantled by Proust himself as a seductive temptation to mystified minds, is also considered here to be a mere *effect* which language can perfectly well achieve, but which bears no substantial relationship, by analogy or by ontologically grounded imitation, to anything beyond that particular effect. It is a rhetorical rather than an aesthetic function of language, an identifiable trope (paranomasis) that operates on the level of the signifier and contains no responsible pronouncement on the nature of the world – despite its powerful potential to create the opposite illusion. The phenomenality of the signifier, as sound, is unquestionably involved in the correspondence between the name and the thing named, but the link, the relationship between word and thing is not phenomenal but conventional.

This gives the language considerable freedom from referential restraint, but it makes it epistemologically highly suspect and volatile, since its use can no longer be said to be determined by considerations of truth and falsehood, good and evil, beauty and ugliness, or pleasure and pain. Whenever this autonomous potential of language can be revealed by analysis, we are dealing with literariness and, in fact, with literature as the place where this negative knowledge about reliability of linguistic utterance is made available. The ensuing foregrounding of material,

phenomenal aspects of the signifier creates a strong illusion of aesthetic seduction at the very moment when the actual aesthetic function has been, at the very least, suspended. It is inevitable that semiology or similarly oriented methods be considered formalistic, in the sense of being aesthetically rather than semantically valorized, but the inevitability of such an interpretation does not make it less aberrant. Literature involves the voiding, rather than the affirmation, of aesthetic categories. One of the consequences of this is that, whereas we have traditionally been accustomed to reading literature by analogy with the plastic arts and with music, we now have to recognize the necessity of a non-perceptual, linguistic moment in painting and in music, and learn to *read* pictures rather than to *imagine* meaning.

If literariness is not an aesthetic quality, it is also not primarily mimetic. Mimesis becomes one trope among others, language choosing to imitate a non-verbal entity just as paranomasis 'imitates' a sound without any claim to identity (or reflection on difference) between the verbal and non-verbal elements. The most misleading representation of literariness, and also the most recurrent objection to contemporary literary theory, considers it as pure verbalism, as a denial of the reality principle in the name of absolute fictions, and for reasons that are said to be ethically and politically shameful. The attack reflects the anxiety of the aggressors rather than the guilt of the accused. By allowing for the necessity of a non-phenomenal linguistics, one frees the discourse on literature from naive oppositions between fiction and reality, which are themselves an offspring of an uncritically mimetic conception of art. In a genuine semiology as well as in other linguistically oriented theories, the referential function of language is not being denied – far from it; what is in question is its authority as a model for natural or phenomenal cognition. Literature is fiction not because it somehow refuses to acknowledge 'reality', but because it is not a priori certain that language functions according to principles which are those, or which are *like* those, of the phenomenal world. It is therefore not a priori certain that literature is a reliable source of information about anything but its own language.

It would be unfortunate, for example, to confuse the materiality of the signifier with the materiality of what it signifies. This may seem obvious enough on the level of light and sound, but it is less so with regard to the more general phenomenality of space, time or especially of the self: no one in his right mind will try to grow grapes by the luminosity of the word 'day', but it is very difficult not to conceive the pattern of one's past and future existence as in accordance with temporal and spatial schemes that belong to fictional narratives and not to the world. This does not mean that fictional narratives are not part of the world and of reality; their impact upon the world may well be all too strong for comfort. What we call ideology is precisely the confusion of linguistic with natural reality, of reference with phenomenalism. It follows that, more than any other mode of inquiry, including economics, the linguistics of literariness is a powerful and indispensable tool in the unmasking of ideological aberrations, as well as a determining factor in accounting for their occurrence. Those who reproach literary theory for being oblivious to social and historical (that is to say ideological) reality are merely stating their fear at having their own ideological mystifications exposed by the tool they are trying to discredit. They are, in short, very poor readers of Marx's *German Ideology*.

In these all too summary evocations of arguments that have been much more extensively and convincingly made by others, we begin to perceive some of the answers to the initial question: what is it about literary theory that is so threatening that it provokes such strong resistances and attacks? It upsets rooted ideologies by revealing the mechanics of their workings; it goes against a powerful philosophical tradition of which aesthetics is a prominent part; it upsets the established canon of literary works and blurs the borderlines between literary and non-literary discourse. By implication, it may also reveal the links between ideologies and philosophy. All this is ample enough reason for suspicion, but not a satisfying answer to the question. For it makes the tension between

contemporary literary theory and the tradition of literary studies appear as a mere historical conflict between two modes of thought that happen to hold the stage at the same time. If the conflict is merely historical, in the literal sense, it is of limited theoretical interest, a passing squall in the intellectual weather of the world. As a matter of fact, the arguments in favor of the legitimacy of literary theory are so compelling that it seems useless to concern oneself with the conflict at all. Certainly, none of the objections to theory, presented again and again, always misinformed or based on crude misunderstandings of such terms as mimesis, fiction, reality, ideology, reference and, for that matter, relevance, can be said to be of genuine rhetorical interest.

It may well be, however, that the development of literary theory is itself over-determined by complications inherent in its very project and unsettling with regard to its status as a scientific discipline. Resistance may be a built-in constituent of its discourse, in a manner that would be inconceivable in the natural sciences and unmentionable in the social sciences. It may well be, in other words, that the polemical opposition, the systematic non-understanding and misrepresentation, the insubstantial but eternally recurrent objections, are the displaced symptoms of a resistance inherent in the theoretical enterprise itself. To claim that this would be a sufficient reason not to envisage doing literary theory would be like rejecting anatomy because it has failed to cure mortality. The real debate of literary theory is not with its polemical opponents but rather with its own methodological assumptions and possibilities. Rather than asking why literary theory is threatening, we should perhaps ask why it has such difficulty going about its business and why it lapses so readily either into the language of self-justification and self-defence or else into the overcompensation of a programmatically euphoric utopianism. Such insecurity about its own project calls for self-analysis, if one is to understand the frustrations that attend upon its practitioners, even when they seem to dwell in serene methodological self-assurance. And if these difficulties are indeed an integral part of the problem, then they will have to be, to some extent, ahistorical in the temporal sense of the term. The way in which they are encountered on the present local literary scene as a resistance to the introduction of linguistic terminology in aesthetic and historical discourse about literature is only one particular version of a question that cannot be reduced to a specific historical situation and called modern, postmodern, post-classical or romantic (not even in Hegel's sense of the term), although its compulsive way of forcing itself upon us in the guise of a system of historical periodization is certainly part of its problematic nature. Such difficulties can be read in the text of literary theory at all times, at whatever historical moment one wishes to select. One of the main achievements of the present theoretical trends is to have restored some awareness of this fact. Classical, medieval and Renaissance literary theory is now often being read in a way that knows enough about what it is doing not to wish to call itself 'modern.'

We return, then, to the original question in an attempt to broaden the discussion enough to inscribe the polemics inside the question rather than having them determine it. The resistance to theory is a resistance to the use of language about language. It is therefore a resistance to language itself or to the possibility that language contains factors or functions that cannot be reduced to intuition. But we seem to assume all too readily that, when we refer to something called 'language', we know what it is we are talking about, although there is probably no word to be found in the language that is as overdetermined, self-evasive, disfigured and disfiguring as 'language'. Even if we choose to consider it at a safe remove from any theoretical model, in the pragmatic history of 'language', not as a concept, but as a didactic assignment that no human being can bypass, we soon find ourselves confronted by theoretical enigmas. The most familiar and general of all linguistic models, the classical *trivium*, which considers the sciences of language as consisting of grammar, rhetoric and logic (or dialectics), is in fact a set of unresolved tensions powerful enough to have generated an infinitely prolonged discourse of endless frustration of which contemporary literary theory, even at its most self-assured, is one more chapter. The

difficulties extend to the internal articulations between the constituent parts as well as to the articulation of the field of language with the knowledge of the world in general, the link between the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*, which covers the non-verbal sciences of number (arithmetic), of space (geometry), of motion (astronomy), and of time (music). In the history of philosophy, this link is traditionally, as well as substantially, accomplished by way of logic, the area where the rigor of the linguistic discourse about itself matches up with the rigor of the mathematical discourse about the world. Seventeenth-century epistemology, for instance, at the moment when the relationship between philosophy and mathematics is particularly close, holds up the language of what it calls geometry (*mos geometricus*), and which in fact includes the homogeneous concatenation between space, time and number, as the sole model of coherence and economy. Reasoning *more geometrico* is said to be 'almost the only mode of reasoning that is infallible, because it is the only one to adhere to the true method, whereas all other ones are by natural necessity in a degree of confusion of which only geometrical minds can be aware'.[3] This is a clear instance of the interconnection between a science of the phenomenal world and a science of language conceived as definitional logic, the pre-condition for a correct axiomatic–deductive, synthetic reasoning. The possibility of thus circulating freely between logic and mathematics has its own complex and problematic history as well as its contemporary equivalences with a different logic and a different mathematics. What matters for our present argument is that this articulation of the sciences of language with the mathematical sciences represents a particularly compelling version of a continuity between a theory of language, as logic, and the knowledge of the phenomenal world to which mathematics give access. In such a system, the place of aesthetics is preordained and by no means alien, provided the priority of logic, in the model of the *trivium*, is not being questioned. For even if one assumes, for the sake of argument and against a great deal of historical evidence, that the link between logic and the natural sciences is secure, this leaves open the question, within the confines of the *trivium* itself, of the relationship between grammar, rhetoric and logic. And this is the point at which literariness, the use of language that foregrounds the rhetorical over the grammatical and the logical function, intervenes as a decisive but unsettling element which, in a variety of modes and aspects, disrupts the inner balance of the model and, consequently, its outward extension to the non-verbal world as well.

Logic and grammar seem to have a natural enough affinity for each other and, in the tradition of Cartesian linguistics, the grammarians of Port-Royal experienced little difficulty at being logicians as well. The same claim persists today in very different methods and terminologies that nevertheless maintain the same orientation toward the universality that logic shares with science. Replying to those who oppose the singularity of specific texts to the scientific generality of the semiotic project, A.J. Greimas disputes the right to use the dignity of 'grammar' to describe a reading that would not be committed to universality. Those who have doubts about the semiotic method, he writes, 'postulate the necessity of constructing a grammar for each particular text. But the essence (*le propre*) of a grammar is its ability to account for a large number of texts, and the metaphorical use of the term … fails to hide the fact that one has, in fact, given up on the semiotic project'.[4] There is no doubt that what is here prudently called 'a large number' implies the hope at least of a future model that would in fact be applicable to the generation of all texts. Again, it is not our present purpose to discuss the validity of this methodological optimism, but merely to offer it as an instance of the persistent symbiosis between grammar and logic. It is clear that, for Greimas as for the entire tradition to which he belongs, the grammatical and the logical function of language are co-extensive. Grammar is an isotope of logic.

It follows that, as long as it remains grounded in grammar, any theory of language, including a literary one, does not threaten what we hold to be the underlying principle of all cognitive and aesthetic linguistic systems. Grammar stands in the service of logic which, in turn, allows for

the passage to the knowledge of the world. The study of grammar, the first of the *artes liberales*, is the necessary pre-condition for scientific and humanistic knowledge. As long as it leaves this principle intact, there is nothing threatening about literary theory. The continuity between theory and phenomenalism is asserted and preserved by the system itself. Difficulties occur only when it is no longer possible to ignore the epistemological thrust of the rhetorical dimension of discourse, that is, when it is no longer possible to keep it in its place as a mere adjunct, a mere ornament within the semantic function.

The uncertain relationship between grammar and rhetoric (as opposed to that between grammar and logic) is apparent, in the history of the *trivium*, in the uncertain status of figures of speech or tropes, a component of language that straddles the disputed borderlines between the two areas. Tropes used to be part of the study of grammar but were also considered to be the semantic agent of the specific function (or effect) that rhetoric performs as persuasion as well as meaning. Tropes, unlike grammar, pertain primordially to language. They are text-producing functions that are not necessarily patterned on a non-verbal entity, whereas grammar is by definition capable of extra-linguistic generalization. The latent tension between rhetoric and grammar precipitates out in the problem of reading, the process that necessarily partakes of both. It turns out that the resistance to theory is in fact a resistance to reading, a resistance that is perhaps at its more effective, in contemporary studies, in the methodologies that call themselves theories of reading but nevertheless avoid the function they claim as their object.

What is meant when we assert that the study of literary texts is necessarily dependent on an act of reading, or when we claim that this act is being systematically avoided? Certainly more than the tautology that one has to have read at least some parts, however small, of a text (or read some part, however small, of a text about this text) in order to be able to make a statement about it. Common as it may be, criticism by hearsay is only rarely held up as exemplary. To stress the by no means self-evident necessity of reading implies at least two things. First of all, it implies that literature is not a transparent message in which it can be taken for granted that the distinction between the message and the means of communication is clearly established. Second, and more problematically, it implies that the grammatical decoding of a text leaves a residue of indetermination that has to be, but cannot be, resolved by grammatical means, however extensively conceived. The extension of grammar to include para-figural dimensions is in fact the most remarkable and debatable strategy of contemporary semiology, especially in the study of syntagmatic and narrative structures. The codification of contextual elements well beyond the syntactical limits of the sentence leads to the systematic study of metaphrastic dimensions and has considerably refined and expanded the knowledge of textual codes. It is equally clear, however, that this extension is always strategically directed towards the replacement of rhetorical figures by grammatical codes. The tendency to replace a rhetorical by a grammatical terminology (to speak of hypotaxis, for instance, to designate anamorphic or metonymic tropes) is part of an explicit program, a program that is entirely admirable in its intent since it tends towards the mastering and the clarification of meaning. The replacement of a hermeneutic by a semiotic model, of interpretation by decoding, would represent, in view of the baffling historical instability of textual meanings (including, of course, those of canonical texts), a considerable progress. Much of the hesitation associated with 'reading' could thus be dispelled.

The argument can be made, however, that no grammatical decoding, however refined, could claim to reach the determining figural dimensions of a text. There are elements in all texts that are by no means ungrammatical, but whose semantic function is not grammatically definable, neither in themselves nor in context. Do we have to interpret the genitive in the title of Keats' unfinished epic *The Fall of Hyperion* as meaning 'Hyperion's fall', the case story of the defeat of an older by a newer power, the very recognizable story from which Keats indeed started out but from which he increasingly strayed away, or as 'Hyperion falling', the much less specific but more disquieting

evocation of an actual process of falling, regardless of its beginning, its end or the identity of the entity to whom it befalls to be falling. This story is indeed told in the later fragment entitled *The Fall of Hyperion*, but it is told about a character who resembles Apollo rather than Hyperion, the same Apollo who, in the first version (called *Hyperion*), should definitely be triumphantly standing rather than falling if Keats had not been compelled to interrupt, for no apparent reason, the story of Apollo's triumph. Does the title tell us that Hyperion is fallen and that Apollo stands, or does it tell us that Hyperion and Apollo (and Keats, whom it is hard to distinguish, at times, from Apollo) are interchangeable in that all of them are necessarily and constantly falling? Both readings are grammatically correct, but it is impossible to decide from the context (the ensuing narrative) which version is the right one. The narrative context suits neither and both at the same time, and one is tempted to suggest that the fact that Keats was unable to complete either version manifests the impossibility, for him as for us, of reading his own title. One could then read the word 'Hyperion' in the title *The Fall of Hyperion* figurally, or, if one wishes, intertextually, as referring not to the historical or mythological character but as referring to the title of Keats' own earlier text (*Hyperion*). But are we then telling the story of the failure of the first text as the success of the second, the Fall of *Hyperion* as the Triumph of *The Fall of Hyperion*? Manifestly yes, but not quite, since the second text also fails to be concluded. Or are we telling the story of why all texts, as texts, can always be said to be falling? Manifestly yes, but not quite, either, since the story of the fall of the first version, as told in the second, applies to the first version only and could not legitimately be read as meaning also the fall of *The Fall of Hyperion*. The undecidability involves the figural or literal status of the proper name Hyperion as well as of the verb falling, and is, thus, a matter of figuration and not of grammar. In 'Hyperion's Fall', the word 'fall' is plainly figural, the representation of a figural fall, and we, as readers, read this fall standing up. But in 'Hyperion falling', this is not so clearly the case, for if Hyperion can be Apollo and Apollo can be Keats, then he can also be us and his figural (or symbolic) fall becomes his and our literal falling as well. The difference between the two readings is itself structured as a trope. And it matters a great deal how we read the title, as an exercise not only in semantics, but in what the text actually does to us. Faced with the ineluctable necessity to come to a decision, no grammatical or logical analysis can help us out. Just as Keats had to break off his narrative, the reader has to break off his understanding at the very moment when he is most directly engaged and summoned by the text. One could hardly expect to find solace in this 'fearful symmetry' between the author's and the reader's plight since, at this point, the symmetry is no longer a formal but an actual trap, and the question no longer 'merely' theoretical.

This undoing of theory, this disturbance of the stable cognitive field that extends from grammar to logic to a general science of man and of the phenomenal world, can in its turn be made into a theoretical project of rhetorical analysis that will reveal the inadequacy of grammatical models of non-reading. Rhetoric, by its actively negative relationship to grammar and to logic, certainly undoes the claims of the *trivium* (and by extension, of language) to be an epistemologically stable construct. The resistance to theory is a resistance to the rhetorical or tropological dimension of language, a dimension which is perhaps more explicitly in the foreground in literature (broadly conceived) than in other verbal manifestations or – to be somewhat less vague – which can be revealed in any verbal event when it is read textually. Since grammar as well as figuration is an integral part of reading, it follows that reading will be a negative process in which the grammatical cognition is undone, at all times, by its rhetorical displacement. The model of the *trivium* contains within itself the pseudo-dialectic of its own undoing and its history tells the story of this dialectic.

This conclusion allows for a somewhat more systematic description of the contemporary theoretical scene. This scene is dominated by an increased stress on reading as a theoretical problem or, as it is sometimes erroneously phrased, by an increased stress on the reception rather than on the production of texts. It is in this area that the most fruitful exchanges have come about between writers and journals of various countries and that the most interesting dialogue has developed

between literary theory and other disciplines, in the arts as well as in linguistics, philosophy and the social sciences. A straightforward *report* on the present state of literary theory in the United States would have to stress the emphasis on reading, a direction which is already present, moreover, in the New Critical tradition of the forties and the fifties. The methods are now more technical, but the contemporary interest in a poetics of literature is clearly linked, traditionally enough, to the problems of reading. And since the models that are being used certainly are no longer *simply* intentional and centred on an identifiable self, nor *simply* hermeneutic in the postulation of a single originary, pre-figural and absolute text, it would appear that this concentration on reading would lead to the rediscovery of the theoretical difficulties associated with rhetoric. This is indeed the case, to some extent; but not quite. Perhaps the most instructive aspect of contemporary theory is the refinement of the techniques by which the threat inherent in rhetorical analysis is being avoided at the very moment when the efficacy of these techniques has progressed so far that the rhetorical obstacles to understanding can no longer be mistranslated in thematic and phenomenal commonplaces. The resistance to theory which, as we saw, is a resistance to reading, appears in its most rigorous and theoretically elaborated form among the theoreticians of reading who dominate the contemporary theoretical scene.

It would be a relatively easy, though lengthy, process to show that this is so for theoreticians of reading who, like Greimas or, on a more refined level, Riffaterre or, in a very different mode, H.R. Jauss or Wolfgang Iser – all of whom have a definite, though sometimes occult, influence on literary theory in this country – are committed to the use of grammatical models or, in the case of *Rezeptionsaesthetik*, to traditional hermeneutic models that do not allow for the problematization of the phenomenalism of reading and therefore remain uncritically confined within a theory of literature rooted in aesthetics. Such an argument would be easy to make because, once a reader has become aware of the rhetorical dimensions of a text, he will not be amiss in finding textual instances that are irreducible to grammar or to historically determined meaning, provided only he is willing to acknowledge what he is bound to notice. The problem quickly becomes the more baffling one of having to account for the shared reluctance to acknowledge the obvious. But the argument would be lengthy because it has to involve a textual analysis that cannot avoid being somewhat elaborate; one can succinctly suggest the grammatical indetermination of a title such as *The Fall of Hyperion*, but to confront such an undecidable enigma with the critical reception and reading of Keats' text requires some space.

The demonstration is less easy (though perhaps less ponderous) in the case of theoreticians of reading whose avoidance of rhetoric takes another turn. We have witnessed, in recent years, a strong interest in certain elements in language whose function is not only not dependent on any form of phenomenalism but on any form of cognition as well, and which thus excludes, or postpones, the consideration of tropes, ideologies, etc., from a reading that would be primarily performative. In some cases, a link is reintroduced between performance, grammar, logic, and stable referential meaning, and the resulting theories (as in the case of Ohmann) are not in essence distinct from those of avowed grammarians or semioticians. But the most astute practitioners of a speech act theory of reading avoid this relapse and rightly insist on the necessity to keep the actual performance of speech acts, which is conventional rather than cognitive, separate from its causes and effects – to keep, in their terminology, the illocutionary force separate from its perlocutionary function. Rhetoric, understood as persuasion, is forcefully banished (like Coriolanus) from the performative moment and exiled in the affective area of perlocution. Stanley Fish, in a masterful essay, convincingly makes this point.[5] What awakens one's suspicion about this conclusion is that it relegates persuasion, which is indeed inseparable from rhetoric, to a purely affective and intentional realm and makes no allowance for modes of persuasion which are no less rhetorical and no less at work in literary texts, but which are of the order of persuasion by *proof* rather than persuasion by seduction. Thus to empty rhetoric of its epistemological impact is possible only

because its tropological, figural functions are being bypassed. It is as if, to return for a moment to the model of the *trivium*, *rhetoric* could be isolated from the generality that grammar and logic have in common and considered as a mere correlative of an illocutionary power. The equation of rhetoric with psychology rather than with epistemology opens up dreary prospects of pragmatic banality, all the drearier if compared to the brilliance of the performative analysis. Speech act theories of reading in fact repeat, in a much more effective way, the grammatization of the *trivium* at the expense of rhetoric. For the characterization of the performative as sheer convention reduces it in effect to a grammatical code among others. The relationship between trope and performance is actually closer but more disruptive than what is here being proposed. Nor is this relationship properly captured by reference to a supposedly 'creative' aspect of performance, a notion with which Fish rightly takes issue. The performative power of language can be called positional, which differs considerably from conventional as well as from 'creatively' (or, in the technical sense, intentionally) constitutive. Speech act oriented theories of reading read only to the extent that they prepare the way for the rhetorical reading they avoid.

But the same is still true even if a 'truly' rhetorical reading that would stay clear of any undue phenomenalization or of any undue grammatical or performative codification of the text could be conceived – something which is not necessarily impossible and for which the aims and methods of literary theory should certainly strive. Such a reading would indeed appear as the methodical undoing of the grammatical construct and, in its systematic disarticulation of the *trivium*, will be theoretically sound as well as effective. Technically correct rhetorical readings may be boring, monotonous, predictable and unpleasant, but they are irrefutable. They are also totalizing (and potentially totalitarian) for since the structures and functions they expose do not lead to the knowledge of an entity (such as language) but are an unreliable process of knowledge production that prevents all entities, including linguistic entities, from coming into discourse as such, they are indeed universals, consistently defective models of language's impossibility to be a model language. They are, always in theory, the most elastic theoretical and dialectical model to end all models and they can rightly claim to contain within their own defective selves all the other defective models of reading-avoidance, referential, semiological, grammatical, performative, logical, or whatever. They are theory and not theory at the same time, the universal theory of the impossibility of theory. To the extent however that they are theory, that is to say teachable, generalizable and highly responsive to systematization, readings, like the other kinds, still avoid and resist the reading they advocate. Nothing can overcome the resistance to theory since theory is itself this resistance. The loftier the aims and the better the methods of literary theory, the less possible it becomes. Yet literary theory is not in danger of going under; it cannot help but flourish, and the more it is resisted, the more it flourishes, since the language it speaks is the language of self-resistance. What remains impossible to decide is whether this flourishing is a triumph or a fall.

Notes

1 Roland Barthes, 'Proust et les noms' in *To Honor Roman Jakobson*, The Hague, 1967, part I, pp. 157ff.

2 'Proust et le langage indirect' in *Figures II*, Paris, 1969.

3 Pascal, 'De l'esprit géométrique et de l'art de persuader', in *Œuvres complètes* presented by L. Lafuma, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963, pp. 349ff.

4 A.J. Greimas, *Du sens*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970, p. 13.

5 Stanley Fish, 'How to do things with Austin and Searle: Speech Act Theory and Literary Criticism', *MLN*, vol. 91, 1976, pp. 983–1025. See especially p. 1008.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Paul de Man in English

Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism, London: Methuen, 1983.
The Rhetoric of Romanticism, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.
The Resistance to Theory, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
Wartime Journalism 1939–43, eds W. Hamacher, N. Hertz, and T. Keenan, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988.
Critical Writings, ed. L. Waters, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.
Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism: The Gauss Seminars and Other Papers, eds E.S. Burt, K. Newmark, and A. Warminski, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.
Aesthetic Ideology, ed. A. Warminski, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Further reading

An introduction to de Man's thought is provided by McQuillian (2001), and collections of critical essays covering different aspects of his work are edited by Brooks *et al*. (1985), Cohen *et al*. (2000), Godzich and Waters (1989), and Redfield (2007).

De Man's critique of aesthetics is addressed by Donougho (2001), Loesberg (1997), Mackenzie (1993) and Norris (1988). His study of the relationship between philosophy and literature is assessed by Jay (1990), Jones (1999), and Michielsen (1989), while his treatment of metaphor is considered by Cazeaux (2007) and Wheeler (1989). Derrida's (1989) book is an act of remembrance for de Man, as well as a tracing of the figure of memory in de Man's writing.

P. Brooks, F. Shoshana, and J. Hillis Miller (eds), *The Lesson of Paul de Man*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.
C. Cazeaux, *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy: From Kant to Derrida*, New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 46–55.
T. Cohen *et al*. (eds), *Material Events: Paul de Man and the Afterlife of Theory*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
J. Derrida, *Memoirs for Paul de Man*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.
M. Donougho, 'On the Hegelian sublime: Paul de Man's judgment call', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 2001, vol. 34, pp. 1–20.
W. Godzich and L. Waters (eds), *Reading de Man Reading*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.
G.S. Jay, 'Paul de Man and the subject of literary history', in H.J. Silverman and G.E. Aylesworth (eds), *The Textual Sublime: Deconstruction and its Differences*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990, pp. 123–38.
M.T. Jones, 'Schiller, Goebbels, and Paul de Man: the dangers of comparative studies', *Mosaic*, 1999, vol. 32, pp. 53–72.
J. Loesberg, 'Materialism and aesthetics: Paul de Man's "aesthetic ideology"', *Diacritics*, 1997, vol. 27, pp. 87–108.
I. Mackenzie, 'Terrible beauty: Paul de Man's retreat from the aesthetic', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1993, vol. 51, pp. 551–60.
M. McQuillian, *Paul de Man*, London: Routledge, 2001.
P. Michielsen, 'Philosophy and literature: their relationship in the works of Paul de Man', *Communication and Cognition*, 1989, vol. 22, pp. 277–84.
C. Norris, *Paul de Man, Deconstruction and the Critique of Aesthetic Ideology*, London: Routledge, 1988.
M. Redfield (ed.), *Legacies of Paul de Man*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.
S.C. Wheeler, 'Metaphor according to Davidson and de Man', in R.W. Dasenbrock (ed.), *Redrawing the Lines: Analytic Philosophy, Deconstruction, and Literary Theory*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Chapter 33

JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD

INTRODUCTION

Consonant with Baudrillard, Jean-François Lyotard (1924–98) argues that as information generation becomes increasingly diverse and complex, knowledge can no longer be regarded as a universal, centred body of ideas. In *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), one of the seminal texts of postmodern thought, Lyotard challenges the concept of the 'grand narrative' or 'meta-narrative': an overarching belief or principle used by a certain group to confer unity upon and, thereby, to legitimize its knowledge claims, e.g. Christianity, (Renaissance) humanism, scientific truth. Instead, knowledge has to be recognized as a more 'local' affair: matters of right and wrong, truth and falsehood are determined within communities and, more precisely, by relationships between phrases internal to genres of discourse.

Whereas Baudrillard collapses the domains of representation and reality into the realm of simulacra, Lyotard is more preoccupied with the idea that reality and representation are incommensurable. That is to say, a fundamental incompatibility exists between the world and the images or judgments we make about it which, according to Lyotard, prevents our knowledge claims from ever being wholly identical or adequate to reality. The sublime is an important category for him in this regard, since it entails moments of indefinability which test the limits of representation. In *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime* (1991), a close reading of the sublime in the *Critique of Judgment* allows Lyotard to appraise the interrelationships and limitations Kant defines for the faculties of cognition, and to assess the boundaries he draws around the communicability of sublime experience.

The featured essay from Lyotard, 'The Sublime and the Avant-Garde' (1984), argues for the sublime as a concept of privation, with implications for the political and epistemological status of art. Edmund Burke's theory of the sublime, from his *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), is more prominent here than Kant's. Sublime experience involves the contradictory feelings of terror and delight and Burke identifies these with a sense of loss – 'the threat of nothing further happening' – which is then withdrawn, allowing a normal sequence of experiences to return. Burke's removal of what is familiar, Lyotard argues, prepares the ground for the avant-garde's stripping away of established, conventional forms of representation. Avant-garde art, he avers, 'abandons the role of identification that the work previously played in relation to the community of addressees'. This supports Lyotard's position on art in 'What is Postmodernism?', noted above: postmodern artworks show the impossibility of complete knowledge *through their form*, rather than offering the idea as a subject for practised, stylized expression. However, he finds that the processes of revolution and renewal in modern art are worryingly consistent with capitalism, and observes that artists can be seduced by market-driven demand for the 'new'. The 'ambiguous, even perverse' correlation which exists between capitalism and the sublime leaves room for a reply though.

■ ■ ■

THE SUBLIME AND THE AVANT-GARDE[1]

JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD

I

In 1950–1, Barnett Baruch Newman painted a canvas measuring 2.42 m by 5.42 m which he called *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*. In the early sixties he entitled his first three sculptures *Here I*, *Here II*, *Here III*. Another painting was called *Not Over There, Here*, two paintings were called *Now*, and two others were entitled *Be*. In December 1948, Newman wrote an essay entitled *The Sublime is Now*.

How is one to understand the sublime, or let us say provisionally, the object of a sublime experience, as a 'here and now'? Quite to the contrary, isn't it essential to this feeling that it alludes to something which can't be shown, or presented (as Kant said, *dargestellt*)? In a short unfinished text dating from late 1949, *Prologue for a New Aesthetic*, Newman wrote that in his painting, he was not concerned with a 'manipulation of space nor with the image, but with a sensation of time'. He added that by this he did not mean time laden with feelings of nostalgia, or drama, or references and history, the usual subjects of painting. After this denial (*dénégation*) the text stops short.

So, what kind of time was Newman concerned with, what 'now' did he have in mind? Thomas Hess, his friend and commentator, felt justified in writing that Newman's time was the *Makom* or the *Hamakom* of Hebraic tradition – the *there*, the site, the place, which is one of the names given by the Torah to the Lord, the Unnameable. I do not know enough about *Makom* to know whether this was what Newman had in mind. But then again, who does know enough about *Now*? Newman can certainly not have been thinking of the 'present instant', the one that tries to hold itself between the future and the past, and gets devoured by them. This 'now' is one of the temporal 'ecstasies' that has been analysed since Augustine's day and since Edmund Husserl, according to a line of thought that has attempted to constitute time on the basis of consciousness. Newman's *now* which is no more than *now* is a stranger to consciousness and cannot be constituted by it. Rather, it is what dismantles consciousness, what deposes consciousness, it is what consciousness cannot formulate, and even what consciousness forgets in order to constitute itself. What we do not manage to formulate is that something happens, *dass etwas geschieht*. Or rather, and more simply, that it happens … *dass es geschieht*. Not a major event in the media sense, not even a small event. Just an occurrence.

This isn't a matter of sense or reality bearing upon *what* happens or *what* this might mean. Before asking questions about what it is and about its significance, before the *quid*, it must 'first' so to speak 'happen', *quod*. That it happens 'precedes', so to speak, the question pertaining to what happens. Or rather, the question precedes itself, because 'that it happens' is the question relevant as event, and it 'then' pertains to the event that has just happened. The event happens as a question mark 'before' happening as a question. *It happens* is rather 'in the first place', *is it happening, is this it, is it possible*? Only 'then' is any mark determined by the questioning: is this or that happening, is it this or something else, is it possible that this or that?

An event, an occurrence – what Martin Heidegger called *ein Ereignis* – is infinitely simple, but this simplicity can only be approached through a state of privation. That which we call thought must be disarmed. There is a tradition and an institution of philosophy, of painting, of politics, of literature. These 'disciplines' also have a future in the form of Schools, of programmes, projects, and 'trends'. Thought works over what is received, it seeks to reflect on it and overcome it. It seeks to determine what has already been thought, written, painted, or socialized in order to determine what hasn't been. We know this process well, it is our daily bread. It is the bread of

war, soldiers' biscuit. But this agitation, in the most noble sense of the word (agitation is the word Kant gives to the activity of the mind that has judgement and exercises it), this agitation is only possible if something remains to be determined, something that hasn't yet been determined. One can strive to determine this something by setting up a system, a theory, a programme or a project – and indeed one has to, all the while anticipating that something. One can also inquire about the remainder, and allow the indeterminate to appear as a question mark.

What all intellectual disciplines and institutions presuppose is that not everything has been said, written down or recorded, that words already heard or pronounced are not the last words. 'After' a sentence, 'after' a colour, comes another sentence, another colour. One doesn't know which, but one thinks one knows if one relies on the rules that permit one sentence to link up with another, one colour with another, rules preserved in precisely those institutions of the past and future that I mentioned. The School, the programme, the project – all proclaim that after this sentence comes that sentence, or at least that kind of sentence is mandatory, that one kind of sentence is permitted, while another is forbidden. This holds true for painting as much as for the other activities of thought. After one pictorial work, another is necessary, permitted, or forbidden. After one colour, this other colour; after this line, that one. There isn't an enormous difference between an avant-grade manifesto and a curriculum at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, if one considers them in the light of this relationship to time. Both are options with respect to what they feel is a good thing to happen subsequently. But both also forget the possibility of nothing happening, of words, colours, forms or sounds not coming; of this sentence being the last, of bread not coming daily. This is the misery that the painter faces with a plastic surface, of the musician with the acoustic surface, the misery the thinker faces with a desert of thought, and so on. Not only faced with the empty canvas or the empty page, at the 'beginning' of the work, but every time something has to be waited for, and thus forms a question at every point of questioning (*point d'interrogation*), at every 'and what now?'

The possibility of nothing happening is often associated with a feeling of anxiety, a term with strong connotations in modern philosophies of existence and of the unconscious. It gives to waiting, if we really mean waiting, a predominantly negative value. But suspense can also be accompanied by pleasure, for instance pleasure in welcoming the unknown, and even by joy, to speak like Baruch Spinoza, the joy obtained by the intensification of being that the event brings with it. This is probably a contradictory feeling. It is at the very least a sign, the question mark itself, the way in which *it happens* is withheld and announced: *Is it happening?* The question can be modulated in any tone. But the mark of the question is 'now', now like the feeling that nothing might happen: the nothingness now.

Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe this contradictory feeling – pleasure and pain, joy and anxiety, exaltation and depression – was christened or re-christened by the name of the *sublime*. It is around this name that the destiny of classical poetics was hazarded and lost; it is in this name that aesthetics asserted its critical rights over art, and that romanticism, in other words, modernity, triumphed.

It remains to the art historian to explain how the word sublime reappeared in the language of a Jewish painter from New York during the forties. The word sublime is common currency today in colloquial French to suggest surprise and admiration, somewhat like America's 'great', but the idea connoted by it has belonged (for at least two centuries) to the most rigorous kind of reflection on art. Newman is not unaware of the aesthetic and philosophical stakes with which the word *sublime* is involved. He read Edmund Burke's *Inquiry* and criticized what he saw as Burke's over 'surrealist' description of the sublime work. Which is as much as to say that, conversely, Newman judged surrealism to be over-reliant on a pre-romantic or romantic approach to indeterminacy. Thus, when he seeks sublimity in the here and now he breaks with the eloquence

of romantic art but he does not reject its fundamental task, that of bearing pictorial or otherwise expressive witness to the inexpressible. The inexpressible does not reside in an over there, in another words, or another time, but in this: in that (something) happens. In the determination of pictorial art, the indeterminate, the 'it happens' is the paint, the picture. The paint, the picture as occurrence or event, is not expressible, and it is to this that it has to witness.

To be true to this displacement in which consists perhaps the whole of the difference between romanticism and the 'modern' avant-garde, one would have to read *The Sublime is Now* not as *The Sublime is Now* but as *Now the Sublime is Like This*. Not elsewhere, not up there or over there, not earlier or later, not once upon a time. But as here, now, it happens that, . . . and it's this painting. Here and now there is this painting, rather than nothing, and that's what is sublime. Letting-go of all grasping intelligence and of its power, disarming it, recognizing that this occurrence of painting was not necessary and is scarcely foreseeable, a privation in the face of *Is it happening?* guarding the occurrence 'before' any defence, any illustration, and any commentary, guarding before being on one's guard, before 'looking' (*regarder*) under the aegis of *now*, this is the rigour of the avant-garde. In the determination of literary art this requirement with respect to the *Is it happening?* found one of its most rigorous realizations in Gertrude Stein's *How to Write*. It's still the sublime in the sense that Burke and Kant described and yet it isn't their sublime any more.

II

I have said that the contradictory feeling with which indeterminacy is both announced and missed was what was at stake in reflection on art from the end of the seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth centuries. The sublime is perhaps the only mode of artistic sensibility to characterize the modern. Paradoxically, it was introduced to literary discussion and vigorously defended by the French writer who has been classified in literary history as one of the most dogged advocates of ancient classicism. In 1674 Boileau published his *Art poètique*, but he also published *Du sublime*, his translation or transcription from the *Peri tou hupsou*. It is a treatise, or rather an essay, attributed to a certain Longinus about whose identity there has long been confusion, and whose life we now estimate as having begun towards the end of the first century of our era. The author was a rhetorician. Basically, he taught those oratorical devices with which a speaker can persuade or move (depending on the genre) his audience. The didactics of rhetoric had been traditional since Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. They were linked to the republican institution; one had to know how to speak before assemblies and tribunals.

One might expect that Longinus' text would invoke the maxims and advice transmitted by this tradition by perpetuating the didactic form of *technē rhetorikē*. But surprisingly, the sublime, the indeterminate – were destabilizing the text's didactic intention. I cannot analyse this uncertainty here. Boileau himself and numerous other commentators, especially Fénélon, were aware of it and concluded that the sublime could only be discussed in sublime style. Longinus certainly tried to define sublimity in discourse, writing that it was unforgettable, irresistible, and most important, thought-provoking – '*il y a à partir d'elle beaucoup de réflexion*' *(hou polle anatheoresis)* (from the sublime springs a lot of reflection). He also tried to locate sources for the sublime in the ethos of rhetoric, in its pathos, in its techniques: figures of speech, diction, enunciation, composition. He sought in this way to bend himself to the rules of the genre of the 'treatise' (whether of rhetoric or poetics, or politics) destined to be a model for practitioners.

However, when it comes to the sublime, major obstacles get in the way of a regular exposition of rhetorical or poetic principles. There is, for example, wrote Longinus, a sublimity

of thought sometimes recognizable in speech by its extreme simplicity of turn of phrase, at the precise point where the high character of the speaker makes one expect greater solemnity. It sometimes even takes the form of outright silence. I don't mind if this simplicity, this silence, is taken to be yet another rhetorical figure. But it must be granted that it constitutes the most indeterminate of figures. What can remain of rhetoric (or of poetics) when the rhetorician in Boileau's translation announces that to attain the sublime effect 'there is no better figure of speech than one which is completely hidden, that which we do not even recognize as a figure of speech'? Must we admit that there are techniques for hiding figures, that there are figures for the erasure of figures? How do we distinguish between a hidden figure and what is not a figure? And what is it, if it isn't a figure? And what about this, which seems to be a major blow to didactics: when it is sublime, discourse accommodates defects, lack of taste, and formal imperfections. Plato's style, for example, is full of bombast and bloated strained comparisons. Plato, in short, is a mannerist, or a baroque writer compared to Lysias, and so is Sophocles compared to an Ion or Pindar compared to a Bacchylides. The fact remains that, like those first named, he is sublime, whereas the second ones are merely perfect. Shortcomings in technique are therefore trifling matters if they are the price to be paid for 'true grandeur'. Grandeur in speech is true when it bears witness to the incommensurability between thought and the real world.

Is it Boileau's transcription that suggests this analogy, or is it the influence of early Christianity on Longinus? The fact that grandeur of spirit is not of this world cannot but suggest Pascal's hierarchy of orders. The kind of perfection that can be demanded in the domain of *technē* isn't necessarily a desirable attribute when it comes to sublime feeling. Longinus even goes so far as to propose inversions of reputedly natural and rational syntax as examples of sublime effect. As for Boileau, in the preface he wrote in 1674 for Longinus' text, in still further addenda made in 1683 and 1701 and also in the *Xth Réflexion* published in 1710 after his death he makes final the previous tentative break with the classical institution of *technē*. The sublime, he says, cannot be taught, and didactics are thus powerless in this respect; the sublime is not linked to rules that can be determined through poetics; the sublime only requires that the reader or listener have conceptual range, taste, and the ability 'to sense what everyone senses first'. Boileau therefore takes the same stand as Pêre Bouhours, when in 1671 the latter declared that beauty demands more than just a respect for rules, that it requires a further 'je ne sais quoi', also called *genius* or something 'incomprehensible and inexplicable', a 'gift from God', a fundamentally 'hidden' phenomenon that can be recognized only by its effects on the addressee. And in the polemic that set him against Pierre-Daniel Huet, over the issue of whether the Bible's *Fiat Lux, et Lux fuit* is sublime, as Longinus thought it was, Boileau refers to the opinion of the Messieurs de Port Royal and in particular to Silvestre de Saci: the Jansenists are masters when it comes to matters of hidden meaning, of eloquent silence, of feeling that transcends all reason and finally of openness to the *Is it happening*?

At stake in these poetic-theological debates is the status of works of art. Are they copies of some ideal model? Can reflection on the more 'perfect' examples yield rules of formation that determine their success in achieving what they want, that is, persuasiveness and pleasure? Can understanding suffice for this kind of reflection? By meditating on the theme of sublimity and of indeterminacy, meditation about works of art imposes a major change on *technē* and the institutions linked to it – Academies, Schools, masters and disciples, taste, the enlightened public made up of princes and courtiers. It is the very destination or destiny of works which is being questioned. The predominance of the idea of *technē* placed works under a multiple regulation, that of the model taught in the studios, Schools, and Academies, that of the taste shared by the aristocratic public, that of a purposiveness of art, which was to illustrate the glory of a name, divine or human, to which was linked the perfection of some cardinal virtue or other. The idea of the sublime disrupts this harmony. Let us magnify the features of – this

disruption. Under Diderot's pen, *technē* becomes *'le petit technique'* (mere trivial technique). The artist ceases to be guided by a culture which made of him the sender and master of a message of glory: he becomes, insofar as he is a genius, the involuntary addressee of an inspiration come to him from an 'I know not what'. The public no longer judges according to the criteria of a taste ruled by the tradition of shared pleasure: individuals unknown to the artist (the 'people') read books, go through the galleries of the Salons, crowd into the theatres and the public concerts, they are prey to unforeseeable feelings: they are shocked, admiring, scornful, indifferent. The question is not that of pleasing them by leading them to identify with a name and to participate in the glorification of its virtue, but that of surprising them. 'The sublime,' writes Boileau, 'is not strictly speaking something which is proven or demonstrated, but a marvel, which seizes one, strikes one, and makes one feel.' The very imperfections, the distortions of taste, even ugliness, have their share in the shock-effect. Art does not imitate nature, it creates a world apart, *eine Zwischenwelt*, as Paul Klee will say, *eine Nebenwelt*, one might say, in which the monstrous and the formless have their rights because they can be sublime.

You will (I hope) excuse such a simplification of the transformation which takes place with the modern development of the idea of the sublime. The trace of it could be found before modern times, in Medieval aesthetics – that of the Victorines for example. In any case, it explains why reflection on art should no longer bear essentially on the 'sender' instance/agency of works, but on the 'addressee' instance. And under the name 'genius' the latter instance is situated, not only on the side of the public, but also on the side of the artist, a feeling which he does not master. Henceforth it seems right to analyse the ways in which the subject is affected, its ways of receiving and experiencing feelings, its ways of judging works. This is how aesthetics, the analysis of the addressee's feelings, comes to supplant poetics and rhetoric, which are didactic forms, of and by the understanding, intended for the artist as sender. No longer 'How does one make a work of art?', but 'What is it to experience an affect proper to art?'. And indeterminacy returns, even within the analysis of this last question.

III

Baumgarten published his *Aesthetica*, the first aesthetics, in 1750. Kant will say of this work simply that it was based on an error. Baumgarten confuses judgement, in its determinant usage, when the understanding organizes phenomena according to categories, with judgement in its reflexive usage when, in the form of feeling, it relates to the indeterminate relationship between the faculties of the judging subject. Baumgarten's aesthetics remains dependent on a conceptually determined relationship to the work of art. The sense of beauty is for Kant, on the contrary, kindled by a free harmony between the function of images and the function of concepts occasioned by an object of art or nature. The aesthetics of the sublime is still more indeterminate: a pleasure mixed with pain, a pleasure that comes from pain. In the event of an absolutely large object – the desert, a mountain, a pyramid – or one that is absolutely powerful – a storm at sea, an erupting volcano – which like all absolutes can only be thought, without any sensible/sensory intuition, as an Idea of reason, the faculty of presentation, the imagination, fails to provide a representation corresponding to this Idea. This failure of expression gives rise to a pain, a kind of cleavage within the subject between what can be conceived and what can be imagined or presented. But this pain in turn engenders a pleasure, in fact a double pleasure: the impotence of the imagination attests *a contrario* to an imagination striving to figure even that which cannot be figured, and that imagination thus aims to harmonize its object with that of reason – and that furthermore the inadequacy of the images is a negative sign of the immense power of ideas. This dislocation of the faculties among themselves gives rise to the extreme tension (Kant

calls it agitation) that characterizes the pathos of the sublime, as opposed to the calm feeling of beauty. At the edge of the break, infinity, or the absoluteness of the Idea can be revealed in what Kant calls a negative presentation, or even a non-presentation. He cites the Jewish law banning images as an eminent example of negative presentation: optical pleasure when reduced to near nothingness promotes an infinite contemplation of infinity. Even before romantic art had freed itself from classical and baroque figuration, the door had thus been opened to inquiries pointing towards abstract and Minimal art. Avant-gardism is thus present in germ in the Kantian aesthetic of the sublime. However, the art whose effects are analysed in that aesthetics is, of course, essentially made up of attempts to represent sublime objects. And the question of time, of the *Is it happening?*, does not form part – at least not explicitly – of Kant's problematic.

I do, however, believe that question to be at the centre of Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, published in 1757. Kant may well reject Burke's thesis as empiricism and physiologism, he may well borrow from Burke the analysis of the characterizing contradiction of the feeling of the sublime, but he strips Burke's aesthetic of what I consider to be its major stake – to show that the sublime is kindled by the threat of nothing further happening. Beauty gives a positive pleasure. But there is another kind of pleasure that is bound to a passion stronger than satisfaction, and that is pain and impending death. In pain the body affects the soul. But the soul can also affect the body as though it were experiencing some externally induced pain, by the sole means of representations that are unconsciously associated with painful situation. This entirely spiritual passion, in Burke's lexicon, is called terror. Terrors are linked to privation: privation of light, terror of darkness; privation of others, terror of solitude; privation of language, terror of silence; privation of objects, terror of emptiness; privation of life, terror of death. What is terrifying is that the *It happens that* does not happen, that it stops happening.

Burke wrote that for this terror to mingle with pleasure and with it to produce the feeling of the sublime, it is also necessary that the terror-causing threat be suspended, kept at bay, held back. This suspense, this lessening of a threat or a danger, provokes a kind of pleasure that is certainly not that of a positive satisfaction, but is, rather, that of relief. This is still a privation, but it is privation at one remove: the soul is deprived of the threat of being deprived of light, language, life. Burke distinguishes this pleasure of secondary privation from positive pleasures, and he baptizes it with the name *delight*.

Here then is an account of the sublime feeling: a very big, very powerful object threatens to deprive the soul of any 'it happens', strikes it with 'astonishment' (at lower intensities the soul is seized with admiration, veneration, respect). The soul is thus dumb, immobilized, as good as dead. Art, by distancing this menace, procures a pleasure of relief, of delight. Thanks to art, the soul is returned to the agitated zone between life and death, and this agitation is its health and its life. For Burke, the sublime was no longer a matter of elevation (the category by which Aristotle defined tragedy), but a matter of intensification.

Another of Burke's observations merits attention because it heralds the possibility of emancipating works of art from the classical rule of imitation. In the long debate over the relative merits of painting and poetry, Burke sides with poetry. Painting is doomed to imitate models, and to figurative representations of them. But if the object of art is to create intense feelings in the addressee of works, figuration by means of images is a limiting constraint on the power of emotive expression since it works by recognition. In the arts of language, particularly in poetry, and particularly in poetry which Burke considered to be not a genre with rules, but the field where certain researches into language have free rein, the power to move is free from the verisimilitudes of figuration.

> What does one do when one wants to represent an angel in a painting? One paints a beautiful young man with wings: but will painting ever provide anything as great as the addition of this one word – the Angel of the *Lord*? and how does one go about painting, with equal strength of feeling, the words 'A universe of death' where ends the journey of the fallen angels in Milton's *Paradise Lost*?

Words enjoy several privileges when it comes to expressing feelings: they are themselves charged with passionate connotations; they can evoke matters of the soul without having to consider whether they are visible; finally, Burke adds, 'It is in our power to effect with words combinations that would be impossible by any other means.' The arts, whatever their materials, pressed forward by the aesthetics of the sublime in search of intense effects, can and must give up the imitation of models that are merely beautiful, and try out surprising, strange, shocking combinations. Shock is, *par excellence*, the evidence of (something) *happening*, rather than nothing, suspended privation.

Burke's analyses can easily, as you will have guessed, be resumed and elaborated in a Freudian–Lacanian problematic (as Pierre Kaufman and Baldine Saint-Girons have done). But I recall them in a different spirit, the one my subject – the avant-garde – demands. I have tried to suggest that at the dawn of romanticism, *Burke's* elaboration of the aesthetics of the sublime, and to a lesser degree *Kant's, outlined a world of possibilities for artistic experiments in which the avant-gardes would later trace out their paths*. There are in general no direct influences, no empirically observable connections. Manet, Cézanne, Braque, and Picasso probably did not read Kant or Burke. It is more a matter of an irreversible deviation in the destination of art, a deviation affecting all the valencies of the artistic condition. The artist attempts combinations allowing the event. The art-lover does not experience a simple pleasure, or derive some ethical benefit from his contact with art, but expects an intensification of his conceptual and emotional capacity, an ambivalent enjoyment. Intensity is associated with an ontological dislocation. The art object no longer bends itself to models, but tries to present the fact that there is an unpresentable; it no longer imitates nature, but is, in Burke, the actualization of a figure potentially there in language. The social community no longer recognizes itself in art objects, but ignores them, rejects them as incomprehensible, and only later allows the intellectual avant-garde to preserve them in museums as the traces of offensives that bear witness to the power, and the privation, of the spirit.

IV

With the advent of the aesthetics of the sublime, the stake of art in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was to be the witness to the fact that there is indeterminacy. For painting, the paradox that Burke signalled in his observations on the power of words is, that such testimony can only be achieved in a determined fashion. Support, frame, line, colour, space, the figure – were to remain, in romantic art, subject to the constraint of representation. But this contradiction of end and means had, as early as Manet and Cézanne, the effect of casting doubt on certain rules that had determined, since the Quattrocento, the representation of the figure in space and the organization of colours and values. Reading Cézanne's correspondence, one understands that his *œuvre* was not that of a talented painter finding his 'style', but that of an artist attempting to respond to the question: what is a painting? His work had at stake to inscribe on the supporting canvas only those 'colouristic sensations', those 'little sensations' that of themselves, according to Cézanne's hypothesis, constitute the entire pictorial existence of objects, fruit, mountain, face, flower, without consideration of either history or 'subject', or line, or space, or even light. These elementary sensations are hidden in ordinary perception which remains under the hegemony of habitual or classical ways of looking. They are only accessible to the painter,

and can therefore only be reestablished by him, at the expense of an interior ascesis that rids perceptual and mental fields of prejudices inscribed even in vision itself. If the viewer does not submit to a complementary ascesis, the painting will remain senseless and impenetrable to him. The painter must not hesitate to run the risk of being taken to be a mere dauber. 'One paints for very few people,' writes Cézanne. Recognition from the regulatory institutions of painting – Academy, salons, criticism, taste – is of little importance compared to the judgement made by the painter-researcher and his peers on the success obtained by the work of art in relation to what is really at stake: to make seen what makes one see, and not what is visible.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty elaborated on what he rightly called 'Cézanne's doubt' as though what was at stake for the painter was indeed to grasp and render perception at its birth – perception 'before' perception. I would say: colour in its occurrence, the wonder that 'it happens' ('it', something: colour), at least to the eye. There is some credulity on the part of the phenomenologist in this trust he places in the 'originary' value of Cézanne's 'little sensations'. The painter himself, who often complained of their inadequacy, wrote that they were 'abstractions', that 'they did not suffice for covering the canvas'. But why should it be necessary to cover the canvas? Is it forbidden to be abstract?

The doubt which gnaws at the avant-gardes did not stop with Cézanne's 'colouristic sensations' as though they were indubitable, and, for that matter, no more did it stop with the abstractions they heralded. The task of having to bear witness to the indeterminate carries away, one after another, the barriers set up by the writings of theorists and by the manifestos of the painters themselves. A formalist definition of the pictorial object, such as that proposed in 1961 by Clement Greenberg when confronted with American 'post-plastic' abstraction, was soon overturned by the current of Minimalism. Do we have to have stretchers so that the canvas is taut? No. What about colours? Malevitch's black square on white had already answered this question in 1915. Is an object necessary? Body art and happenings went about proving that it is not. A space, at least, a space in which to display, as Duchamp's 'fountain' still suggested? Daniel Buren's work testifies to the fact that even this is subject to doubt.

Whether or not they belong to the current that art history calls Minimalism or Arte Povera, the investigations of the avant-gardes question one by one the constituents one might have thought 'elementary' or at the 'origin' of the art of painting. They operate *ex minimis*. One would have to confront the demand for rigour that animates them with the principle sketched out by Adorno at the end of *Negative Dialectics*, and that controls the writing of his *Aesthetic Theory*: the thought that 'accompanies metaphysics in its fall', he said, can only proceed in terms of 'micrologies'.

Micrology is not just metaphysics in crumbs, any more than Newman's painting is Delacroix in scraps. Micrology inscribes the occurrence of a thought as the unthought that remains to be thought in the decline of 'great' philosophical thought. The avant-gardist attempt inscribes the occurrence of a sensory now as what cannot be presented and which remains to be presented in the decline of great representational painting. Like micrology, the avant-garde is not concerned with what happens to the 'subject', but with: 'Does it happen?', with privation. This is the sense in which it still belongs to the aesthetics of the sublime.

In asking questions of the *It happens* that the work of art is, avant-garde art abandons the role of identification that the work previously played in relation to the community of addressees. Even when conceived, as it was by Kant, as a *de jure* horizon or presumption rather than a *de facto* reality, *a sensus communis* (which, moreover, Kant refers to only when writing about beauty, not the sublime) does not manage to achieve stability when it comes to interrogative works of art. It barely coalesces, too late, when these works, deposited in museums, are considered part of the community heritage and are made available for its culture and pleasure. And even here, they must be objects, or they must tolerate objectification, for example through photography.

In this situation of isolation and misunderstanding, avant-garde art is vulnerable and subject to repression. It seems only to aggravate the identity-crisis that communities went through during the long 'depression' that lasted from the thirties until the end of 'reconstruction' in the mid-fifties. It is impossible here even to suggest how the Party-states born of fear faced with the 'Who are we?', and the anxiety of the void, tried to convert this fear or anxiety into hatred of the avant-gardes. Hildegarde Brenner's study of artistic policy under Nazism, or the films of Hans-Jürgen Sylberberg, do not merely analyse these repressive manoeuvres. They also explain how neo-romantic, neo-classical and symbolic forms imposed by the cultural commissars and collaborationist artists – painters and musicians especially – had to block the negative dialectic of the 'Is it happening?', by translating and betraying the question as a waiting for some fabulous subject or identity: 'Is the pure people coming?', 'Is the Führer coming?', 'Is Siegfried coming?'. The aesthetics of the sublime, thus neutralized and converted into a politics of myth, was able to come and build its architectures of human 'formations' on the Zeppelin Feld in Nürnberg.

Thanks to the 'crisis of overcapitalization' that most of today's so-called highly developed societies are going through, another attack on the avant-gardes is coming to light. The threat exerted against the avant-garde search for the artwork event, against attempts to welcome the *now*, no longer requires Party-states to be effective. It proceeds 'directly' out of market economics. The correlation between this and the aesthetics of the sublime is ambiguous, even perverse. The latter, no doubt, has been and continues to be a reaction against the matter-of-fact positivism and the calculated realism that governs the former, as writers on art such as Stendhal, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Apollinaire and Breton all emphasize.

Yet there is a kind of collusion between capital and the avant-garde. The force of scepticism and even of destruction that capitalism has brought into play, and that Marx never ceased analysing and identifying, in some way encourages among artists a mistrust of established rules and a willingness to experiment with means of expression, with styles, with ever-new materials. There is something of the sublime in capitalist economy. It is not academic, it is not physiocratic, it admits of no nature. It is, in a sense, an economy regulated by an Idea – infinite wealth or power. It does not manage to present any example from reality to verify this Idea. In making science subordinate to itself through technologies, especially those of language, it only succeeds, on the contrary, in making reality increasingly ungraspable, subject to doubt, unsteady.

The experience of the human subject – individual and collective – and the aura that surrounds this experience, are being dissolved into the calculation of profitability, the satisfaction of needs, self-affirmation through success. Even the virtually theological depth of the worker's condition, and of work, that marked the socialist and union movements for over a century, is becoming devalorized, as work becomes a control and manipulation of information. These observations are banal, but what merits attention is the disappearance of the temporal continuum through which the experience of generations used to be transmitted. The availability of information is becoming the only criterion of social importance. Now information is by definition a short-lived element. As soon as it is transmitted and shared, it ceases to be information, it becomes an environmental given, and 'all is said', we 'know'. It is put into the machine memory. The length of time it occupies is, so to speak, instantaneous. Between two pieces of information, 'nothing happens', by definition. A confusion thereby becomes possible, between what is of interest to information and the director, and what is the question of the avant-gardes, between what happens – the new – and the 'Is it happening?', the *now*.

It is understandable that the art-market, subject like all markets to the rule of the new, can exert a kind of seduction on artists. This attraction is not due to corruption alone. It exerts itself thanks to a confusion between innovation and the *Ereignis*, a confusion maintained by the temporality specific to contemporary capitalism. 'Strong' information, if one can call it that, exists in inverse

proportion to the meaning that can be attributed to it in the code available to its receiver. It is like 'noise'. It is easy for the public and for artists, advised by intermediaries – the diffusers of cultural merchandise – to draw from this observation the principle that a work of art is avant-garde in direct proportion to the extent that it is stripped of meaning. Is it not then like an event?

It is still necessary that its absurdity does not discourage buyers, just as the innovation introduced into a commodity must allow itself to be approached, appreciated and purchased by the consumers. The secret of an artistic success, like that of a commercial success, resides in the balance between what is surprising and what is 'well-known', between information and code. This is how innovation in art operates: one re-uses formulae confirmed by previous success, one throws them off balance by combining them with other, in principle incompatible, formulae, by amalgamations, quotations, ornamentations, pastiche. One can go as far as kitsch or the grotesque. One flatters the 'taste' of a public that can have no taste, and the eclecticism of a sensibility enfeebled by the multiplication of available forms and objects. In this way one thinks that one is expressing the spirit of the times, whereas one is merely reflecting the spirit of the market. Sublimity is no longer in art, but in speculation on art.

The enigma of the 'Is it happening?' is not dissolved for all this, nor is the task of painting, that there is something which is not determinable, the 'There is' (*Il y a*) itself, out of date. The occurrence, the *Ereignis*, has nothing to do with the *petit frisson*, the cheap thrill, the profitable pathos, that accompanies an innovation. Hidden in the cynicism of innovation is certainly the despair that nothing further will happen. But innovating means to behave as though lots of things happened, and to make them happen. Through innovation, the will affirms its hegemony over time. It thus conforms to the metaphysics of capital, which is a technology of time. The innovation 'works'. The question mark of the 'Is it happening?' stops. With the occurrence, the will is defeated. The avant-gardist task remains that of undoing the presumption of the mind with respect to time. The sublime feeling is the name of this privation.

Translated by Lisa Liebmann, with Geoff Bennington and Marian Hobson

Note

1 This text was first published in *Art Forum*, 22, part 8 (April 1984), pp. 36–43, in a translation by Lisa Liebmann, which is reproduced with kind permission. Alterations were made to the French text by Jean-François Lyotard when he gave the paper in Cambridge in March 1984, and these have been translated by Geoff Bennington and Marian Hobson and incorporated into the translation.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Jean-François Lyotard in English

Phenomenology (1954), trans. B. Beakley, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991.

Discourse, Figure (1971), trans. A. Hudek and M. Lydon, Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2011.

Libidinal Economy (1974), trans. I.H. Grant, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993.

Just Gaming (with J.-L. Thébaud; 1979), trans. W. Godzich, Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.

The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (1979), trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi, Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.

The Differend: Phrases in Dispute (1983), trans. G. Van Den Abbeele, Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.

The Assassination of Experience by Painting, Monory (1984), ed. S. Wilson, trans. R. Bowlby and J. Bouniort, London: Black Dog, 1998.
Driftworks, ed. R. McKeon, New York: Semiotext(e), 1984.
Enthusiasm: The Kantian Critique of History (1986), trans. G. Van Den Abbeele, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
Peregrinations: Law, Form, Event, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
Heidegger and 'The Jews' (1988), trans. A. Michel and M. Roberts, Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1990.
The Inhuman: Reflections on Time (1988), trans. G. Bennington and R. Bowlby, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991.
The Postmodern Explained to Children: Correspondence 1982–1985 (1988), trans. J. Pefanis and M. Thomas, Sydney: Power Publications, 1992.
Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime (1991), trans. E. Rottenberg, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.
Postmodern Fables (1993), trans. G. Van Den Abbeele, Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1997.
The Hyphen: Between Judaism and Christianity (with E. Gruber; 1994), trans. P.-A. Brault and M. Nass, New York: Humanity Press, 1999.
Signed, Malraux (1996), trans. R. Harvey, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
The Confession of Augustine (1998), trans. R. Beardsworth, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
Soundproof Room: Malraux's Anti-Aesthetics (1998), trans. R. Harvey, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
The Lyotard Reader, ed. A. Benjamin, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.
The Lyotard Reader and Guide, eds K. Crome and J. Williams, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

Further reading

Aesthetics and politics are inexorably tied together for Lyotard, as Readings's (1990) introduction and Silverman's (2002) collection make clear. However, aspects of the subjects can be given different emphasis. Studies of Lyotard on aesthetics, representation, and the sublime are given by Carroll (1987), Fry (2004), Held (2005), Kearney (1998), Malpas (2002), Rajchman (1998), Rancière (2004), Ross (2005), Sanderson (2007), Slaughter (2004), and Vandenabeele (2001, 2008), while Bennington (1988), Browning (2002), Curtis (2001), Fry (2004), and Williams (2000) focus on Lyotard's political thought.

Assessments of Lyotard's work on the status of philosophy and critical thought are provided by Beardsworth (2007), Gasché (2000), and Steuerman (1999), and his contribution to debates on gender, embodiment, and the human is examined by Grebowicz (2002, 2007), Sim (2001), Vasterling (2003), and Weber (2002).

For appraisals of Lyotard's articulation of the postmodern, see Browning (2000), Brugger (2001), Nola and Irzik (2003), Pefanis (1991) and Watson (1984). Overviews of his philosophy are given by Harvey (2001) and Malpas (2003), and collections of critical essays exploring a range of Lyotardian themes have been edited by Benjamin (2002) and Nouvet *et al*. (2007).

R. Beardsworth, 'Modernity in French thought: excess in Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jean-François Lyotard', *Telos*, 2007, vol. 137, pp. 67–95.
A. Benjamin (ed.), *Judging Lyotard*, London: Routledge, 2002.
G. Bennington, *Lyotard: Writing the Event*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988.
G.K. Browning, *Lyotard and the End of Grand Narratives*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000.
———, 'Lyotard: after and with Marx, with and against capital', *Contemporary Politics*, 2002, vol. 8, pp. 87–102.
N. Brugger, 'What about the postmodern? The concept of the postmodern in the work of Lyotard', *Yale French Studies*, 2001, vol. 99, pp. 77–92.
D. Carroll, *Paraesthetics: Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida*, New York: Methuen, 1987.
N. Curtis, *Against Autonomy: Lyotard, Judgement and Action*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.
K. Fry, 'The role of aesthetics in the politics of Jean-François Lyotard', *Philosophy Today*, 2004, vol. 48, pp. 87–93.
R. Gasché, 'Saving the honor of thinking: on Jean-François Lyotard', *Parallax*, 2000, vol. 6, pp. 127–45.
M. Grebowicz, 'Outer spaces: Lyotard and feminist epistemology', *Philosophy Today*, 2002, vol. 46, pp. 120–27.
———, *Gender After Lyotard*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007.
R. Harvey, *Jean-François Lyotard: Time and Judgment*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
J.M. Held, 'Expressing the inexpressible: Lyotard and the differend', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 2005, vol. 36, pp. 76–89.

R. Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining: From Husserl to Lyotard*, 2nd edn, New York: Fordham University Press, 1998.
S. Malpas, 'Sublime ascesis: Lyotard, art, and the event', *Angelaki*, 2002, vol. 7, pp. 199–212.
———, *Jean-François Lyotard*, London: Routledge, 2003.
R. Nola and G. Irzik, 'Incredulity towards Lyotard: a critique of a postmodernist account of science and knowledge', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 2003, vol. 34, pp. 391–421.
C. Nouvet, Z. Stahuljak, and K. Still (eds), *Minima Memoria: In the Wake of Jean-François Lyotard*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
J. Pefanis, *Heterology and the Postmodern: Bataille, Baudrillard, and Lyotard*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.
J. Rajchman, 'Jean-François Lyotard's underground aesthetics', *October*, 1998, vol. 86, pp. 3–18.
J. Rancière, 'The sublime from Lyotard to Schiller: two readings of Kant and their political significance', *Radical Philosophy*, 2004, vol. 126, pp. 8–15.
B. Readings, *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics*, London: Routledge, 1990.
A. Ross, 'The art of the sublime: Lyotard and the politics of the avant garde', *Philosophy Today*, 2005, vol. 49, pp. 32–45.
M. Sanderson, 'Catastrophic time: Kant and Lyotard on sublime temporality', *International Studies in Philosophy*, 2007, vol. 39, pp. 43–58.
H.J. Silverman (ed.), *Lyotard: Philosophy, Politics and the Sublime*, New York: Routledge, 2002.
S. Sim, *Lyotard and the Inhuman*, Duxford: Icon, 2001.
M. Slaughter, 'The arc and the zip: Deleuze and Lyotard on art', *Law and Critique*, 2004, vol. 15, pp. 231–57.
E. Steuerman, *The Bounds of Reason: Habermas, Lyotard, and Melanie Klein on Rationality*, New York: Routledge, 1999.
B. Vandenabeele, 'On the notion of "disinterestedness": Kant, Lyotard, and Schopenhauer', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 2001, vol. 62, pp. 705–20.
———, 'Aesthetic solidarity "after" Kant and Lyotard', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 2008, vol. 42, pp. 17–30.
V. Vasterling, 'Body and language: Butler, Merleau-Ponty, and Lyotard on the speaking embodied subject', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 2003, vol. 11, pp. 205–23.
S. Watson, 'Jürgen Habermas and Jean-François Lyotard: postmodernism and the crisis of rationality', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 1984, vol. 10, pp. 1–24.
C. Weber, 'The sexist sublime in Sade and Lyotard', *Philosophy and Literature*, 2002, vol. 26, pp. 397–404.
J. Williams, *Lyotard and the Political*, London: Routledge, 2000.

Chapter 34

HÉLÈNE CIXOUS

INTRODUCTION

It is extremely hard to classify the work of the French feminist writer Hélène Cixous (b. 1937). But this resistance to classification is a part of her radical feminism, 'radical' in that it is a feminism which does not seek equality with men but which challenges the structures of patriarchal thought. Cixous's *écriture feminine* takes a variety of forms: novels, stories, fictions, theatre, essays, theory, and criticism. She uses the style and format of writing to transgress the binary distinctions of Western, phallocentric reason. Her work can be regarded as a form of deconstruction in that, by experimenting with literary styles, it subverts accepted conventions of argument and narrative, and restores materiality to the text. The feminist interest served by this deconstruction is the generation of new ways of representing physical, bodily experience, achieved through the materiality of text. By making the form of her work as significant as its content, her texts acquire a contingency and a particularity which eludes existent conceptual divisions. Professionalism and the culture of the expert dictate that you become adept *at one thing* but Cixous shrugs this off, cultivating instead the innocence of marking, scribbling, jotting down in an attempt to achieve a state of 'knowing how not to know', knowing how not to know in phallocentric terms.

The insight that comes from employing different media and styles itself becomes the object of speculation in 'The Last Painting or the Portrait of God'. The 1986 essay, one of Cixous's more discursive pieces, compares painting and writing as forms of representation. 'I would like to write like a painter. I would like to write like painting,' she announces at the start. Fidelity is her principal concern: 'fidelity to what exists… In painting as in writing, there is no other "beauty" than fidelity to what is.' Painting, she claims, can submit us to process, 'can let things come through', whereas language is 'troubled by phrases already heard a thousand times'. What ensures fidelity, she argues, is a sense of dissatisfaction and primarily, for the artist or writer, dissatisfaction with her medium. The 'last painting' in Cixous's title is based on a quotation from the expressionist painter and writer Oskar Kokoschka and refers to the level of perception that is achieved in the last painting of a long series: the repetition the artist has to go through before the representation of water lilies ceases to be mere representation and the distinction between subject and object, perceiver and perceived, disappears, leaving only 'the day's atom on the canvas'. But this moment will always elude us; the painting will always be *the next one*. There is the rule, Cixous observes, that repetition in writing is bad form, but it is the right to repeat that she wants to claim for writing: 'to repeat the word until it becomes dry orange-skin'. This would approach a portrait of God, a portrait 'of what escapes us and makes us wonder'.

On the one hand, Cixous's account of painting is somewhat idealized or romanticized. A lot of what she writes comes from the fact that, as she admits, she is not a painter: 'I can't nourish your eyes with mimosa light. So I beg you: please, see the mimosas that I see. Imagine the mimosas. See what you don't see, out of love for me.' Painting though is not as direct and immediate as Cixous

assumes. Every medium has its own materiality – its structures of possibility and resistance – which cannot help but alter and redirect the moment. Even the task of recreating a colour throws the painter into a complex state of negotiation with her medium. On the other hand, Cixous's essay is an expression of the desire for fulfilment which an artist from one background feels in response to the work of an artist from another. It is the hope or promise which an artist sees in another way of working that intrigues her. 'Would I love this way,' Cixous asks, 'if I were a painter?' She transforms the incompleteness of her medium (the written word) into a plea for greater attentiveness to our own incompleteness and to the 'hope for the impossible' which arises from dissatisfaction.

Comparisons can be drawn between Cixous's essay and Sartre's 'What is Writing?' above. Cixous's initial assertion of the immediacy of painting stands in direct contrast to Sartre's claim for its obstructive materiality; the visual image, he avows, possesses a thinghood which distracts the viewer from their commitment to worldly activity, whereas language is transparent and passes the reader onto the world. However, with the equivocation that appears later in Cixous's paper, when both painting and writing are shown as incomplete, the two thinkers' ideas are, for a time, parallel. As Roquentin realizes, at the end of Sartre's novel *Nausea*, the impossibility of full and final description is not so much an indication of the futility of language as a dynamic which motivates the author to generate new forms of expression.

■ ■ ■

THE LAST PAINTING OR THE PORTRAIT OF GOD

HÉLÈNE CIXOUS

I would like to write like a painter. I would like to write like painting.

The way I would like to live. Maybe the way I manage to live, sometimes. Or rather: the way it is sometimes given to me to live, in the present absolute.

In the happening of the instant.

Just at the moment of the instant, in what unfurls it, I touch down then let myself slip into the depth of the instant itself.

This is how I live, this is how I try to write. The best company for me is she or he who is in touch with the instant, in writing.

And what is a painter? A bird-catcher of instants.

'I will have to work very hard to render what I am looking for: the instantaneous impression, particularly the envelope of things, the same all-pervading light.'[1]

Monet, in 1890, is the one who said that: what I am looking for, instantaneousness … the same light spread throughout, the same light, the same light.

There is a literary *œuvre* which is dear to me, the work of Clarice Lispector. She wrote *Agua Viva*. This book aims to write-paint, aims to work on the gesture of writing as a gesture of painting. I say 'aims': one can always ask oneself the question of the reality of the thing. What brings this book closer to a painter's gesture is that it is a book of instants, a book from which each page could be taken out like a picture. Clarice says: 'Each thing has an instant in which it is. I want to take possession of the thing's *is*.'[2]

I want to take hold of the third person of the present. For me, that is what painting is, the chance to take hold of the third person of the present, the present itself.

But in life, it is 'only in the act of love – by the clear, starlike abstraction of what one feels [that] we capture the unknown quality of the instant, which is hard and crystalline and vibrant in the air, and life is that incalculable instant, greater than the event itself.'

Who could write: 'Is my theme the instant? my life theme. I try to keep up with it, I divide myself thousands of times, into as many times as the seconds that pass away, fragmentary as I am and precarious the moments.'[3] It may be Clarice Lispector, it may be Monet.

I would like to write to what is living in life; I would like to be in the sea and render it in words. Which is impossible. I would like to write the rose-colored beach and the pearly ocean. And it is February. Completely impossible. My words can't tell you the simultaneously infinite and yet finite beach rolled out like a[n] immense carpet of rosy sands. My words are colorless. Barely sonorous? What I can tell you, a painter would show you.

I would like to break your heart with the magnificent calm of a beach safe from man. But I can't do it, I can only tell it. All I can do is tell the desire. But the painter can break your heart with the epiphany of a sea. There's a recipe: 'To really paint the sea, you have to see it everyday, at every hour and in the same place, to come to know the life in this location.'[4]

That's Monet. Monet who knows how to paint the sea: how to paint the sameness of the sea.

It's in vain that I say to you: Côte Rocheuse, Lion's Rock, Belle-Ile. And the green sea and the black lion don't fall on your heart over and over. I tell you of the rocks at Belle-Ile. But eternity doesn't suddenly stream forth and enter, weeping, through your eyes into the depths of your body.

With a haystack, I tell you 'haystack,' I don't reveal the setting sun to you, I don't intoxicate you with the discovery of the colors in the light, I don't make you laugh, I don't make you cry. I write.

I love paintings the way the blind must love the sun: feeling it, breathing it in, hearing it pass through the trees, adoring it with regret and pain, knowing it through the skin, seeing it with the heart. I don't paint. I need painting. I write in the direction of painting. I position myself toward the sun. Toward the light. Toward painting.

The blind don't see the sun? They see the sun in a different way. And perhaps I, in writing, paint in a different way. I paint in the dark. But this is my blind way of calling forth light.

I'm calling.

There are mimosas in the garden. I want so much to give them to you to see.

I am only a poet, I am only a poor painter without canvas without brush without palette.

But not without God; being only a poet, I am really obligated to count on God, or on you, or on someone.

I'm calling: Mimosa! I'm calling you.

I tell you on the telephone: I want so much for you to see the mimosas. I send you the word 'mimosa'; I hope that once delivered to your breast, it will transform itself into a vision of mimosa. I am a being who paints mimosas by phone.

If I were a painter! I would give you each mimosa-cluster whole. I would give you my mimosa-soul, down to the most minute quivering of the yellow spheres.

I would put my mimosoul on the canvas, before your eyes. But I don't paint. I can only speak to you of mimosas. I can sing the word 'mimosa.' I can make the magic name ring out, the mimosa word: I can give you the music of the mimosa. I can swear to you that (the) mimosa is a synonym for alleluia.

And still, how fortunate that there is the word 'mimosa'! I can tell you that the mimosa mimes. I can tell you, too, that the mimosa originates in Brazil.

But I can't nourish your eyes with mimosa light. So I beg you: please, see the mimosas that I see. Imagine the mimosas. See what you don't see, out of love for me. The mimosa is the painter's nymph.

I am the awkward sorceress of the invisible: my sorcery is powerless to evoke, without the help of your sorcery. Everything I evoke depends on you, depends on your trust, on your faith.

I gather words to make a great straw-yellow fire, but if you don't put in your own flame, my fire won't take, my words won't burst into pale yellow sparks. My words will remain dead words. Without your breath on my words, there will be no mimosas.

Ah! If I were Monet. I would fill your house with mimosas, with wisteria, with poppies. With palm trees. With straw. Only their fragrance would be missing.

I write. But I need the painter to give a face to my words. First of all, I write; then you must paint what I've said to you.

Am I jealous of the painter's power? Yes. No. I sense the terrific beating of the painter's heart, the vertigo, the urgency. It is perhaps what I like the most in painting: the beating of the heart. If I were a painter, what pain! what passion! What incessant jealousy of the sky, of the air, what torturous adoration of the light! If I were a painter I would see, I would see, I would see, I would see, I would be panic-stricken, I would run incessantly toward the potato fields, toward the pollard willows. If I were a painter I would know immediately that America is in the heath.

Since I am not a painter, I make detours and go through texts: 'Do come and paint with me on the heath, in the potato field, come and walk with me behind the plough and the shepherd – come and sit with me, looking into the fire – let the storm that blows across the heath blow through you.

'Break loose from your bonds. I do not know the future, in what way it might be different if everything should go smoothly with us, but I cannot speak differently: Don't seek it in Paris, don't seek it in America; it is always the same, forever and ever exactly the same. Change, if you will, but it is in the heath you must look.'[5]

That was Van Gogh.

I would roll around in desire and pain if I were a painter beneath the stars; if I were a painter I would die endlessly of wonder. I would live in ecstasy until it was at last granted to me to *no longer* see the stars, to no longer see the silk of gray-silver water crossed through and through by a fine strip of sun from my feet to the infinite, in the water, to no longer see the magnificence of sun-powder, until it was at last granted to me to stretch myself out in the dust, to rest among the marvelous powders of the earth. If I were a painter I would live in the fire, I would want to take up the fire in my hands. I would want to catch fire. I would end up losing my sight, and I would thank God. It's fitting that Monet painted with eyes closed, at the end of his life.

I am nearsighted. And even if I have often blamed God for this, I often thank him for it. It's a relief. My nearsightedness spares me the agony of those who see the secrets of the sky. I write because I am nearsighted: it's also, I think, through nearsightedness, thanks to my nearsightedness, that I love:

I am someone who looks at things from very, very close up. Seen through my eyes, little things are very big. Details are my kingdoms. Some people survey. Some people who are far-seeing don't see what is very near. I am someone who sees the smallest letters of the earth. Flat on my stomach in the garden, I see the ants, I see each of the ants' feet. Insects become my heroes. Am I not a little bit right? Human beings are divine insects.

What is beautiful is that such little creatures can be so big.

Such are the benefits of my nearsightedness. This is how I console myself for not being a painter. Would I love this way if I were a painter?

How do I sense what I don't know – the painter's agony? The paintings are what tell me about the painter's passion. Not just *one* singular painting. But rather a series, a sheaf of paintings, a

herd of paintings, a flock, a tribe of paintings. I see Monet's twenty-six cathedrals. I don't know if *one* cathedral would carry me away. Twenty-six cathedrals is a full gallop.

And I sense the struggle. I see the race of speed with the light. I see the challenge. I see the audacity.

The painter is the combatant of enigma.

The painter, the true painter, doesn't know how to paint. He looks for the secret. He will put his life into it. The painter is always Percival. He sets off, he leaves the forest, but in order to come back, on his way around the world, to the forest. I sense the painter's superhuman task: to capture the hundred cathedrals that are born in one day from the cathedral of Rouen. To see them being born. To see them succeeding one another. To see the cathedral in all its lights in one hour. It's to die for.

So he attacks the cathedral and the cathedral attacks him.

This is the struggle with the cathedral: 'It's killing, and for this I give up everything, you, my garden … And something which never happens, my sleep was filled with nightmares: the cathedral fell down on top of me, it appeared either blue, pink or yellow.'[6] And Julie Manet tells us: 'Mr. Monet showed us his cathedrals. There are twenty-six of them, and they are magnificent. Some are entirely violet, others white and yellow, with a blue sky, or pink with a slightly green sky. Then there is one in the fog … You discover every detail in them; they are as if suspended in mid-air'.[7]

Seeing the cathedral's truth which is twenty-six, and noting it, means seeing time. Painting time. Painting the marriage of time with light. Painting the works of time and light.

That's what I would like to do if I were a painter.

The sun moves so quickly. The cathedral changes so often. It was pink a short time ago. Now look at it, violet and flying low.

And we are so slow.

Life is so rapid.

'I doggedly keep exploring a series of different effects (of haystacks), but at this time of year the sun goes down so quickly that I cannot follow it.'[8]

Following the sun, painting the differences. I see Monet attacking his poppy field, mounted on four easels. The paintbrushes fly about. Monet is racing.

And even as I have been writing this page, the sun has disappeared. We who write are so slow. And I think of the painter's magic swiftness.

Writing this, I said to myself that perhaps what I like about painting is its mad speed. And people will tell me, there are also slow painters. I don't know. I know nothing about it. I only imagine. But only those who are fast, those who pursue haystacks on four easels, matter to me.

And I think of the rapidity and fatality of desire: vying with light. 'You need a Japanese swiftness.' No, that wasn't Hokusai, but Van Gogh.

While I was writing this, I prudently held myself back from going out into all the fields that surround me, in order to avoid a too-great vertigo, and it was only when this brief reflection was over that I rewarded myself and wanted to reread Van Gogh's letters. I had been convinced that Van Gogh was a slow painter. Here is what I found:

> The Japanese draw quickly, very quickly, like a lightning flash, because their nerves are finer, their feeling simpler.
>
> … I have only been here a few months, but tell me this – could I, in Paris, have done the drawing of the boats *in an hour*? Even without the perspective frame, I do it now without measuring, just by letting my pen go.[9]

> It is great that Claude Monet managed to paint those ten pictures between February and May. Quick work doesn't mean less serious work, it depends on one's self-confidence and experience.[10]
>
> I must warn you that everyone will think that I work too fast.
>
> Don't you believe a word of it.
>
> Is it not emotion, the sincerity of one's feeling for nature, that draws us, and if the emotions are sometimes so strong that one works without knowing one works, when sometimes the strokes come with a continuity and a coherence like words in a speech or a letter, then one must remember that it has not always been so, and that in time to come there will again be hard days, empty of inspiration.
>
> So one must strike while the iron is hot, and put the forged bars on one side.
>
> I have not yet done half the 50 canvases fit to be shown in public, and I must do them all this year.
>
> I know beforehand that they will be criticized as *hasty*.
>
> … If my health doesn't betray me, I shall polish off my canvases, and there will be some that will do among them.[11]

And to do that, what lightness must have been achieved!

For that, one has to have broken off with everything that holds one back: calculations, backward or sideways glances, hidden motives, acquired, accumulated, hardened knowledge. And especially all the fears: fear of the unknown, fear of criticism, fear of not knowing, fear of the evil eye: 'They will say I am mad' (that's Monet). Fears, one shakes them off. One plays with them. One paints quicker than they take hold.

One does not paint yesterday, one does not even paint today, one paints tomorrow, one paints what will be, one paints 'the imminence of.'

And to do that, letting go of all ties, one flings oneself beyond the ego. This is perhaps the greatest lesson painting gives us: flinging oneself beyond the ego. For the ego is the last root preventing flight. Or the last anchor. One has to unfasten oneself the best one can, with a snap, or by slowly filing away the soul-ring of lead.

I imagine it's easier for a landscape painter than for a writer to get free; the charm of the visible world is so powerful. At times, the painter's ego is no more attached than a milk tooth. A pull, and straight away, with a leap, in the middle of creation. We are born together. It's raining. We know nothing. We are part of everything.

'Under this fine rain I breathe in the innocence of the world. I feel coloured by the nuances of infinity. At this moment I am at one with my picture. We are an iridescent chaos … The sun penetrates me soundlessly like a distant friend that stirs up my laziness, fertilises it. We bring forth life.'[12]

That was Cézanne.

At that moment, when the ego no longer weighs him down, the painter becomes permeable, becomes immense and virgin, and becomes woman. He lets light work in him. Submission to the process. He becomes tender, he becomes plant, he becomes earth, the sun impregnates him. *Tanta mansidão*, such gentleness …[13]

But how do we obtain this lightness, this active passivity, this capacity to let things come through, this submission to the process? We who are so heavy, so obstinately activist, so impatient. How could we become virgin and young and innocent? How could we come all the way from our over-furnished memories and our museums of words to the garden of beginnings and rustlings?

This is our problem as writers. We who must paint with brushes all sticky with words. We who must swim in language as if it were pure and transparent, though it is troubled by phrases

already heard a thousand times. We who must clear a new path with each thought through thickets of clichés. We who are threatened at every metaphor, as I am at this moment, with false steps and false words.

But there is a path. It makes us go around the world to regain the second innocence. It's a long path. Only at the end of the path can we regain the force of simplicity or of nudity. Only at the end of life, I believe, will we be able to understand life's secret. One must have traveled a great deal to discover the obvious. One must have thoroughly rubbed and exhausted one's eyes in order to get rid of the thousands of scales we start with from making up our eyes.

There are poets who have strived to do this. I call 'poet' any writing being who sets out on this path, in quest of what I call the second innocence, the one that comes after knowing, the one that no longer knows, the one that knows how not to know.

I call 'poet' any writer, philosopher, author of plays, dreamer, producer of dreams, who uses life as a time of 'approaching.' Fortunately, we have inherited rigorous accounts of their adventures. There are poet-painters, like Van Gogh. There are poet-painters like Clarice Lispector. Whoever would like to know how to go about clearing the gaze should read *The Passion According to G.H.*,[14] by Clarice Lispector.

One must have gone a long way in order to finally leave behind our need to veil, or lie, or gild. Leaving behind the need to gild: this would be the passion according to Rembrandt.

In his very beautiful texts on Rembrandt, Genet says (still remaining within the tradition of reading Rembrandt) that the trajectory of Rembrandt's works began by gilding, by covering over with gold, and then by burning the gold, consuming it, to attain the gold-ash with which the last paintings are painted.

It is only at the end of a superhuman human-going-to-the-depths-of-the-fathoming-of-life-and-back that one will be able to cease gilding everything (Rimbaud and Clarice also knew this). And then one can begin to adore.

This is when one will be allowed to arrive at what I have called, in a text entitled *Lemonade Everything Was So Infinite*, 'the last phrase,' the one that holds on to the book or the author with no more than a breath. I have allowed myself to adventure toward the canvas partly because I had written this text, *Lemonade Everything Was So Infinite*. Because, in order to work on what is, for me, the very treasure of writing – in other words, ultimate phrases that are full of being, both so heavy and so light that they are more precious to me than an entire book; in order to work on the mystery of these phrases, I have been led to help myself with painting. I have not found any other more helpful example than some of the long journeys undertaken by painters, by Rembrandt in particular. And, arbitrarily or not, I had made a distinction between what I had called 'works of art' and 'works of being.' For me, works of art are works of seduction, works that can be magnificent, works that are really destined to make themselves seen. Where I am arbitrary is in classifying this or that painter in this or that category. For example, for me, da Vinci's works are only works of art. This may be a mistake. But I will put forward a hypothesis: let us look at a painting by da Vinci and a painting by Rembrandt. We will see da Vinci's painting search us out with its eyes, not take its eyes off us, catch hold of us: these are eye-catching paintings.

In Rembrandt, what is overwhelming is the extent to which in the most intense presence, the people he had looked at are alone, have the absence of intimacy, do not feel themselves looked at; they are looking inside their hearts in the direction of the infinite. By going along this double path, I am now able to tell myself that what matters to me most, in art, are works of being: works which no longer need to proclaim their glory, or their magisterial origin, to be signed, to return, to make a return to celebrate the author. This was why, in the text where I dealt with that topic, I inscribed like a precious stone the phrase: 'Lemonade everything was so

infinite …,' a phrase that signified everything to me, the beginning and the end, the whole of life, enjoyment, nostalgia, desire, hope – an *unsigned* phrase by Kafka, a phrase that fell from his hand, from his man's hand at the moment he was not striving to be a writer, the moment he was Franz Kafka himself, beyond books. If these phrases have been collected and printed in spite of everything, it is because it was God's will that, deprived of his voice, as he was dying, Kafka scribbled down, on scraps of paper, what was passing through his mind: and those who were with him at the moment of his passing collected those scraps of paper that are for me the most beautiful books in the world. Perhaps these so very delicate phrases, these phrases of a dying man, are the equivalent, extremely rare in writing, of what is much more frequent in painting: the last paintings. It's at the end, at the moment when one has attained the period of relinquishing, of adoration, and no longer of gilding, that miracles happen.

A magnificent thing happened to Hokusai:

> In loving the pretentious style of He-ma-mu-sho-Niūdō, the painter Yamamizu Tengu, of Noshi-Koshiyama, appropriated for himself the incomprehensible art of his drawings. Now, I who have studied this style for almost a hundred years, without understanding any more of it than he, nevertheless had this strange thing happen to me: I notice that my characters, my animals, my insects, my fish, look as if they are escaping from the paper. Is this not truly extraordinary? And a publisher, who was informed of this fact, asked for these drawings, in such a way that I could not refuse him. Fortunately the engraver Ko-Izumi, a very skilled woodcutter, with his very sharp knife, took care to cut the veins and nerves of the beings I drew, and was able to deprive them of the liberty of escaping.[15]

What we have, when Hokusai was over two hundred years old, at the time when he was finally five or six years old, is a collection of drawings that scarcely hold back the beings, fish, insects, or men within their narrow limits.

In what way can I feel close to the painter (the one I love, the madman of painting, of drawing, the unworldly, the celestial, the airborne, the burning)?

First of all, in the need not to lie, not to veil in writing. Which doesn't mean I manage not to lie. It's so difficult not to lie when one writes. And maybe even in the need to write in order to lie less, to scrape the scales away, the too-rich words, to undecorate, unveil. In the need not to submit the subject of writing, of painting, to the laws of cultural cowardice and habit.

In the need, which doesn't mean its execution, not to make things pretty, not to make things clean, when they are not; not to do the right thing. But, whatever the price, to do the true thing.

Rembrandt, who is said not to have had particularly audacious tendencies, but who as a painter was absolutely free, drew and painted nude women I find admirably beautiful, although not everyone has been of this opinion. Here is what a contemporary, A. Houbraken, said in 1710:

> Rembrandt … refused to conform to the rules of other artists, and still less to follow the illustrious examples of those who had covered themselves with glory by taking beauty as a model; he contented himself with representing life as it offered itself to him, without making a choice. This is why the great poet Andries Pels very wittily said of him in his *Use and Abuse of the Stage* (page 36): 'Whenever he had to paint a nude woman, he took as a model not a Greek Venus but rather a washerwoman or servant girl from an inn: he called this deviation the imitation of nature and treated all the rest as vain decoration. From the sagging breasts and the deformed hands, to the frayed lace of the bodice opening across

> the stomach, to the garters around the legs – everything had to be shown, in order to remain faithful to nature. He did not want to listen to any of the rules of moderation that recommended the representation of only certain parts of the body.'
>
> I greatly appreciate Pels's frankness and I ask the reader not to misinterpret my sincere opinion: I do not hate the work of this man, but I wish to compare the different conceptions and methods of art, and to incite those who desire to learn to follow the best way. Apart from this, I join the same poet in saying: 'What a loss for art that such a skilled hand did not use its gifts better! For who would have surpassed him? But the greater the genius, the more he can stray when he does not yield to any principles or to any traditional rule, and when he thinks he can find everything within himself.'[16]

And to think that today, in our time, people think like this self-righteous biographer, but with a slight difference: painters are allowed to contemplate a woman's real nudity. But in writing, this is not yet entirely allowed.

What does my gesture of writing have in common with the gesture of the one who paints?

The concern with fidelity. Fidelity to what exists. To everything that exists. And fidelity is equal respect for what *seems* beautiful to us and what seems ugly to us. I stress *seems*.

But under the paintbrush, before the gaze, in the light of respect, there is nothing ugly which does not seem equally beautiful.

Painting does not know the ugly.

It isn't the beautiful that is true. It's the true that is … I don't want to say beautiful. The ugly looked at with respect and without hatred and without disgust is equal to the 'beautiful.' The nonbeautiful is also beautiful.

Or rather, there is no beautiful more beautiful than the ugly. In painting as in writing, there is no other 'beauty' than fidelity to what is. Painting renders – but what it renders is justice. Everything that is: the cathedral, the haystack, the sunflowers, the vermin, the peasants, the chair, the skinned ox, the flayed man, the cockroach.

Because everything that is loved, everything that finds grace, is equal to the 'beautiful.' Everything we don't reject.

We are the ones who decide that this is beautiful, that this is ugly. With our selfish tastes and distastes.

But everything is equal to God and to the painter. And this lesson is often given to the poet by painting. To love the ugly with an equal-to-equal love.

Everything that is (looked at justly) is good. Is exciting. Is 'terrible.' Life is terrible. Terribly beautiful, terribly cruel. Everything is marvelously terrible, to whoever looks at things as they are.

'I am toiling away at the rate of six paintings a day. I find it *terribly* difficult to catch all the colours of this country; at times, I am *appalled* at the kind of colours I have to use, I'm afraid my colours will seem *terrible* and yet I have considerably toned them down: this place is *drenched in light* … But how happy I am here because each day I can find the same effect again, *catch it and come to grips with it*.'[17]

That was Monet.

Seeing the world as it is demands strengths, virtues. Which ones? Patience and courage.

The patience one has to have to approach the nonostensible, the minute, the insignificant, to discover the worm as a star without luster. To discover the grasshopper's worth.

The patience one must have to see the egg. The egg that might bore us at first glance the way a stone would. One needs patience to contemplate the egg, to brood on it, to see the hen in the egg, to see the history of the world in this shell. One needs another patience to see the absolute egg, the egg without the hen, the egg without signs, the naked egg, the egg egg. And it is with this patience that we can hope to see God.

And the kind of courage?

The greatest kind of courage. The courage to be afraid. To have the two fears. First we have to have the courage to be afraid of being hurt. We have to not defend ourselves. The world has to be suffered. Only through suffering will we know certain faces of the world, certain events of life: the courage to tremble and sweat and cry is as necessary for Rembrandt as for Genet. And it is necessary for Clarice Lispector to have the courage to feel disgust and love for the beggar with the amputated leg, disgust and love for the stump, horror at the rat which is also acceptance of the rat. For whoever writes, accepting the rat demands a far greater effort than for whoever has accepted the rat in advance, has begun to paint it. Whoever writes can easily hide her eyes.

And there is also the other fear, the least dazzling, the most burning: the fear of reaching joy, acute joy, the fear of allowing oneself to be carried away by exaltation, the fear of adoring. We must not be afraid of feeling this fear scalding the blood in our veins.

I am talking about what we are given to see, the spectacle of the world. Maybe it's easier for a painter than for someone who writes not to create hierarchies.

Painting may be more adept at not forgetting turtles than writing is. Writing is terribly human. Perhaps the word causes more fear and more hurt? … I don't know.

We can say joy. Can we paint it?

I'm talking about fidelity.

But perhaps the rarest, the most magnanimous fidelity, is the one we could have with regard to the reality of the human soul. It is so hard not to hate! Not to be the wolf for the other. To have for the traitor or the villain, the executioner, Rembrandt's calm and tender eyes for those who loved him, for those who betrayed him. Could Rembrandt be Shakespeare? I thought about it, thinking it was an impertinence. Van Gogh had thought about it before me.

> I have already read *Richard II*, *Henry IV* and half of *Henry V*. I read without wondering if the ideas of the people of those times were different from our own, or what would become of them if you confronted them with republican and socialist beliefs and so on. But what touches me, as in some novelists of our day, is that the voices of these people, which in Shakespeare's case reach us from a distance of several centuries, do not seem unfamiliar to us. It is so much alive that you think you know them and see the thing.
>
> And so what Rembrandt has alone or almost alone among painters, that tenderness of gaze which we see, whether it's in the 'Men of Emmaus' or in the 'Jewish Bride' or in some strange angelic figure as the picture you have had the good fortune to see, that brokenhearted tenderness, that glimpse of a superhuman infinitude that seems so natural there – in many places you come upon it in Shakespeare too. And then above all he is full of portraits, grave or gay, like 'Six' and the 'Traveler,' and like 'Saskia.'[18]

That was Van Gogh shortly before his death.

To be faithful as Shakespeare was to Lady Macbeth, to King Lear, to Shylock.

To create without commentary, without condemnation, without interpretation.

With respect for the shadows as for the light. Without knowing more or better.

I envy the painter: humility, in other words the justice of the look, is more easily granted to him than to the one who writes; because the painter is always defeated. He sees himself defeated. He always emerges out of breath from the combat that throws him on the world. Doesn't he always have before him the painting he hasn't done? The twenty-seventh cathedral, to remind him that one cathedral will always have escaped him?

Doesn't he have before his eyes the painting he will not do, the one that slips by his brush? The one he will do tomorrow, tomorrow if God wills it, or never?

There are painters who for me are voyagers of truth. They have given me lessons.

Whom do I call the voyagers of truth?

The one who painted water lilies for the last ten years of his life. The one who painted water lilies up until the last painting. Until his death. And then: 'The sea: I should like to always be before it or above it, and when I am dead, to be buried in a buoy.'[19] That is Monet's wish – to become seagull, water lily.

The one who painted a hundred Fujiyamas. The one who signed the map of China: 'Old man Manji crazy about painting, voyager from Katsushika, eighty-one years old.'

The one who searches until the last painting.

The one who paints with his right hand, his left hand, with his nails. This is Hokusai.

The one who knows that he will not find, because he knows that if he found, he would have nothing else to do except continue to search for the new mystery. The one who knows he must continue to search.

The one who does not become discouraged, does not tire.

I love the one who dares to stalk the secrets of light with the help of a single subject, armed with only a few water lilies.

And the lesson is: one does not paint ideas. One does not paint 'a subject.' One does not paint water lilies. And in the same way: no writing ideas. There is no subject. There are only mysteries. There are only questions.

Kandinsky sees the haystacks: 'And suddenly, for the first time, my eyes were drawn to a painting … I had the confused feeling that the subject was lacking in this picture … The subject, as the necessary element of paintings, lost all credit to my eyes.'[20]

What a struggle to no longer 'paint water lilies,' while *painting* water lilies. I mean: in order not to do the portrait of the water lilies, what a number of water lilies he will have had to paint before the representation of the water lilies wears itself out, before the water lilies are no longer the cause, before they are no longer the object, the aim, but the occasion, the everyday water lily, the day itself, the day's atom on the canvas.

Until they are no more, these water lilies, than Hokusai's everyday lion. In 1843, at the age of eighty-three, Hokusai tells himself that it is time he did his lions, and every morning he does his karashishi: 'I continue to draw hoping for a peaceful day' – that was the way he did two hundred and nineteen of them, until the lions were no more than the water lilies' path toward infinity.

And how I love the one who dared to paint the painter, again and again, until at the hundredth 'self-portrait' he succeeded in painting the painter impersonally; and yet ever so humanly; so nakedly human. Until we no longer think, 'This is a portrait of Rembrandt by himself.' Until at the hundredth portrait the name is so worn out that it no longer hides the man at all. And this man is as he is. He is old and absent-minded and, without proclaiming it and perhaps without knowing it, full of the mystery of age, time, and death.

> I was in England during the Second World War, without any money and unhappy. My wife, who is younger and more courageous than I, said to me: 'Let's go and look for consolation in a museum.' Ruins were accumulating on the face of the earth. Not only was London being bombed – which was of little importance – but we learned every day of the annihilation of a new city. Devastation, destruction: the annihilation of a world becoming poorer and sadder. What bitterness. I looked at the last self-portrait of Rembrandt: ugly and broken, dreadful and full of despair; and so marvelously painted. And suddenly I understood: being capable of looking at oneself disappearing into the mirror – no longer seeing anything – and painting oneself as 'nothingness,' the negation of man. What a miracle, what a symbol. I drew courage and a new youth from this.[21]

That was Kokoschka.

How much patience, how much time in order for Rembrandt to cease resembling Rembrandt, to cease clinging to Rembrandt, and little by little to let himself slide, without being frightened, into the resemblance of someone, of no one.

How much greater a love for painting than for oneself! To come as far as the portraits of a man who allows himself to look, who allows himself to paint, who gives himself to be painted, by renouncing himself, who gives himself to painting as others do to God. And as the dead man does to science. So that it can advance on his body.

Perhaps Rembrandt dreamed of doing the last portrait of the painter? The one that only Rembrandt, at the end of his life, could have done? I dream of it.

The portrait of Rembrandt on his deathbed? For it is at this moment that he would have perceived the most anonymous, the most present, the most immediate, the most ephemeral, the essential, the mystery of human being. And if almost dead or already dead, in other words entirely freed from the rest of the Rembrandt he had painted, then he would have painted painting itself. He would truly have painted like no one.

I dream of this purity. I dream of this power of freedom. To paint the enigma. The enigmatic in painting. I think of the last Rembrandt. A man? Or a painting? I think of the last Hokusai. What is the name of the person who painted the last Hokusai?

I think of Hokusai's series of names like the series of water lilies. He had a hundred and one names. First he was called Shunro. Then, expelled from school, took the name Kusamara. Took the name Sori in '95. Hokusai Sori-ga, which means Studio of the North Star, Source of Truth; also called himself Toito, Litsu, Zen Hokusai, Gakyojin Hokusai, then Tawaraya, Hyakurin, Kanchi, and Sori.

Then abandoned the name Sori to his pupil. And called himself Tatsumasa, Sorobeku, Tokitaro, Gayojin Totogako Zen Hokusai, Sensei Kutsushika Taito, Zen Hokusai Tasmeitsu Gakyorojin Manji. All these names had a meaning. Not one was Hokusai.

Following himself without turning back. One after the other letting himself go.

Always being the future. Being the follower. The next one. Being one's own next one. The unknown one. Surpassing oneself. And yet not preceding the self. Abandoning oneself. In words. In curves. Abandoning one's names. One's signatures. Giving oneself entirely to rediscovery.

And so, in the course of time, what does this produce? What does this produce in the end?

A possibly mad purity.

One can tell the facts. One can invent some. It is more difficult to tell than to invent. Inventing is easy.

But the most difficult is fidelity to what one feels, there, at the extremity of life, at the nerve endings, around the heart.

And for that, there are no words. For what one feels, there are no words. For the reality of the soul, there are no words. But there are tears. One can allude to the divine. But the word 'god' is only a subterfuge.

Words are our accomplices, our traitors, our allies. We have to make use of them, spy on them, we should be able to purify them.

This is the dream of philosophers and poets. Words drive us mad. 'By repeating a word over and over again, it loses its meaning and becomes a hollow and redundant thing, and attains its own hard, enigmatic body.'[22]

Clarice amused herself by saying, 'Spirit, spirit, spirit.' And in the end, spirit flew. In the end, what is spirit?

'It is a sparkling and audacious word, like a flight of sparrows. Sometimes the repeated word becomes the dry orange-skin of itself, and no longer glows with even a sound.'[23]

What happens at the end of two hundred and nineteen lions? What happens at the end of ten thousand or a hundred thousand water lilies?

I claim the right to repeat the word until it becomes dry orange-skin, or until it becomes fragrance. I want to repeat the words 'I love you' until they become spirit.

But repetition, in those who write, is very badly received. The painter has the right to repeat until water lilies become divine sparrows.

To practice abandoning oneself to the water lilies.

Perhaps in the end that would give the portrait of God, or the self-portrait of God by Hokusai.

When Hokusai produced the hundred views of Mount Fuji, this is what he said:

> From the age of six, I had a passion for drawing the form of objects. By the age of about fifty, I had published an infinity of drawings, but nothing I produced before the age of seventy is worth counting. It was at the age of seventy-three that I more or less understood the structure of true nature, of animals, grasses, birds, fish, and insects.
>
> Consequently, by the age of eighty, I will have made even more progress; at ninety I will penetrate the mystery of things; at a hundred I will definitely have reached a degree of wonder, and when I am a hundred and ten, for my part, be it a dot, be it a line, everything will be alive.
>
> I ask those who will live as long as I do to see if I keep my word.
>
> Written at the age of seventy-five by myself, formerly Hokusai, today Gwakiō Rōjin, the old man crazy about drawing.[24]

This is truly the message of hope. It gives me a great deal of hope; I tell myself that when I am a hundred and ten, I will likewise know how to write a book that will be a dot.

Painting and writing – they are just that, hoping absolutely, they are what we might call *sunflower life*, to borrow an image from Van Gogh or from Clarice Lispector: 'Almost all lives are small. What enlarges a life is the inner life, are the thoughts, are the sensations, are the useless hopes … Hope is like a sunflower which turns aimlessly toward the sun. But it is not "aimless."'[25]

What enlarges a person's life are the impossible dreams, the unrealizable desires. The one that has not yet come true. And these hopes, these desires are so strong that at times one falls, and when a person falls, she sees, she is once again turned toward the inaccessible sun. Why does the flower have a fragrance that is not for anyone, and for nothing …?

Like hope. Hope aims at hope itself.

And the painter? Paints from hope to hope. And between the two? Is there despair? Nonhope. Between-hope. But straightaway, hope arises. What I love is the painter's dissatisfaction, what a wonder: a furious Monet burning thirty canvases. Destroying his 'overworked' canvases.

Seen by us, these canvases were 'beautiful.' Seen by him, they are obstacles on the path to the last one.

His dissatisfaction is hope. Hope for the impossible. To turn oneself once again toward the sun is an act of faith. Writing the sun is as impossible as painting the air. This is what I want to do.

When I have finished writing, when I am a hundred and ten, all I will have done will have been to attempt a portrait of God. Of the God. Of what escapes us and makes us wonder. Of what we do not know but feel. Of what makes us live. I mean our own divinity, awkward, twisted, throbbing, our own mystery – we who are lords of this earth and do not know it, we who are touches of vermilion and yellow cadmium in the haystack and do not see it, we who are the eyes of this world and so often do not even look at it, we who could be the painters, the poets, the artists of life if only we wanted to; we who could be the lovers of the universe, if we really wanted to use our hands with mansuetude, we who so often use our booted feet to trample the world's belly.

We who are bits of sun, drops of ocean, atoms of the god, and who so often forget this, or are unaware of it, and so we take ourselves for employees. We who forget we could also be

as luminous, as light, as the swallow that crosses the summit of the incomparable hill Fuji, so intensely radiant that we could ourselves be the painter's models, the heroes of human presence and the painter's gaze. But what we forget, the painter, who sees God each day in the process of changing, does not forget …

In what way do I feel different from these painters I love? In my way of loving an interior apple as much as an exterior apple.

'I received today a splendid apple, sent by Mr. Bellio; by its size and colours it is quite a phenomenon: he tells me that amidst so many orange trees I might feel like biting into a big apple from Normandy, hence his nice present.

'I did not dare to bite into it and offered it to Mr. Moreno.'[26]

That was Monet.

Myself, I would have eaten it. In this way, I am different from those I would like to resemble. In my need to touch the apple without seeing it. To know it in the dark. With my fingers, with my lips, with my tongue.

In my need to share with you the food, the bread, the words, the painted food and also the not-painted food.

In my need to make use of my right hand to hold the pen and write, and of my two hands to hold nothing, to caress and to pray.

I am going to finish …

I have a postscript, Hokusai's address. In case, having reached the age of a hundred and ten, we are looking for him here it is:

'When you come, do not ask for Hokusai; they will not know how to answer you. Ask for the priest who draws and who recently moved into the building, ask the owner Gorobei for the beggar-priest in the courtyard of the Meio-in temple, in the middle of the bush.'[27]

May I have merited such an address … by the time I am ninety years old …

Translated by Sarah Cornell and Susan Sellers, with Deborah Jenson and Ann Liddle

Notes

1 Claude Monet, letter to Gustave Geffroy, in *Claude Monet at the Time of Giverny*, ed. Jacqueline and Maurice Guillaud, Paris: Guillaud, 1983, p. 80.
2 Clarice Lispector, *The Stream of Life*, trans. Elizabeth Lowe and Earl Fitz, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. 3.
3 Ibid., p. 4.
4 Monet, letter to Alice Hoschedé, in *At the Time of Giverny*, p. 27.
5 *The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, vol. 2, Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, n.d., p. 204. Cixous has slightly modified this translation. – Editor [Deborah Jenson].
6 Monet, letter to Alice Hoschedé, in *At the Time of Giverny*, p. 36.
7 Journal of Julie Manet, in ibid., p. 36.
8 Monet, letter to Gustave Geffroy, in ibid., p. 80.
9 *The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, vol. 2, p. 590.
10 Ibid., p. 596.
11 Ibid., pp. 598–99.
12 Paul Cézanne, quoted by Joachim Gasquet, in *At the Time of Giverny*, p. 208.

13 See Clarice Lispector, 'Such Gentleness,' in *Soulstorm: Stories by Clarice Lispector*, trans. Alexis Levitin, New York: New Directions, 1989, pp. 160–61.
14 See Clarice Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.*, trans. Ronald W. Sousa, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.
15 *Le Fou de peinture: Hokusai et son temps*, exhibition catalog, Centre Culturel du Marais, Paris, CRES, 1980, p. 217.
16 A. Houbraken, in Horst Gerson, *Rembrandt et son œuvre*, Paris: Hachette, 1968, p. 466.
17 Monet, letter to Alice Hoschedé, in *At the Time of Giverny*, p. 33, emphasis added.
18 *The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, vol. 3, p. 187.
19 Monet, in *At the Time of Giverny*, p. 198.
20 Wassily Kandinsky, in ibid., p. 80.
21 Oskar Kokoschka, in Gerson, *Rembrandt et son œuvre*, p. 478.
22 Unpublished notebooks by Clarice Lispector, cited in Olga Borelli, *Clarice Lispector: Esboço para um possível retrato*, Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1981, p. 77.
23 Ibid., p. 77.
24 *Le Fou de peinture*, p. 376.
25 Clarice Lispector, in Borelli, *Clarice Lispector*, p. 21.
26 Monet, letter to Alice Hoschedé, in *At the Time of Giverny*, p. 31.
27 *Le Fou de peinture*, p. 361.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Hélène Cixous in English

The Newly Born Woman (with C. Clément; 1975), trans. B. Wing, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986.
Reading with Clarice Lispector (1989), trans. V. Andermatt Conley, Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1990.
'Coming to Writing' and Other Essays, trans. S. Cornell *et al.*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991.
Readings: The Poetics of Blanchot, Joyce, Kafka, Kleist, Lispector and Tsvetayeva, trans. V. Andermatt Conley, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992.
Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing, trans. S. Cornell and S. Sellers, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
Hélène Cixous, Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing (with M. Calle-Gruber; 1994), trans. E. Prenowitz, London: Routledge, 1997.
Stigmata: Escaping Texts, London: Routledge, 1998.
Portrait of Jacques Derrida as a Young Jewish Saint (2001), trans. B. Bie Brahic, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
The Writing Notebooks of Hélène Cixous, ed. and trans. S. Sellers, London: Continuum, 2004.
Vera's Room: The Art of Maria Chevska, London: Black Dog, 2005.
The Insister of Jacques Derrida (2006), trans. P. Kamuf, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.
White Ink: Interviews on Sex, Text, and Politics, ed. S. Sellers, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
Philippines (2009), Cambridge: Polity, 2010.
Zero's Neighbour: Sam Beckett, trans. L. Milesi, Cambridge: Polity, 2010.
The Book I Do Not Write, trans. E. Prenowitz, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.
The Hélène Cixous Reader, ed. S. Sellers, London: Routledge, 1994.
The Portable Cixous, ed. M. Segarra, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

Further reading

Introductions to Cixous's writing are available from Blyth and Sellers (2004), Cahill (2005), and Korsmeyer (2008), while collections edited by Dobson and Rye (2000), Jacobus and Barreca (1999), and Wilcox *et al.* (1990) offer a critical overview of central themes in her work. Cixous's *écriture feminine* is examined by Bachner (2005),

Bray (2004), Conley (1984), Crowder (1983), Duren (1981), Gibbons (2006), Jeannet (2006), Kamuf (1995), Lydon (1995), Renshaw (2009), Shiach (1991), Sellers (1987, 1996), and Shurmer-Smith (1994).

Broader studies of writing, philosophy, and politics in Cixous are offered by Buys and Polatinsky (2009), Conley (1992, 2000), Davis (1992), Gasbarrone (1994), and Schrift (1996). The relation between her work and Derrida's is considered by Armel *et al.* (2006), Colebrook (2008), Michaud (2006), Prenowitz (2008), Regard (2005) and Segarra (2007), while Bryden's (2004) essay compares Cixous with Deleuze. What translation might mean in the context of Cixous's writing is discussed in a collection of essays edited by Diocaretz and Segarra (2004).

A. Armel, J. Derrida, and H. Cixous, 'From the word to life: a dialogue between Jacques Derrida and Hélène Cixous', *New Literary History*, 2006, vol. 37, pp. 1–14.

A. Bachner, 'New spaces for literature: Can Xue and Hélène Cixous on writing', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 2005, vol. 42, pp. 155–82.

I. Blyth and S. Sellers, *Hélène Cixous: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2004.

A. Bray, *Hélène Cixous: Writing and Sexual Difference*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

M. Bryden, 'Stroboscopic vision: Deleuze and Cixous', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 2004, vol. 15, pp. 320–29.

A. Buys and S. Polatinsky, 'The provocation of Hélène Cixous: philosophy in poetic overflow', *Mosaic*, 2009, vol. 42, pp. 79–94.

A.J. Cahill, 'Continental feminism', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2005. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/femapproach-continental/ (accessed 25 May 2010).

C. Colebrook, 'Cixous and Derrida', *Angelaki*, 2008, vol. 13, pp. 109–24.

V.A. Conley, *Hélène Cixous: Writing the Feminine*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.

———, *Hélène Cixous: Modern Cultural Theorists*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.

———, 'Hélène Cixous: the language of flowers', in L. Coupe, *The Green Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 148–54.

D.G. Crowder, 'Amazons and mothers? Monique Wittig, Hélène Cixous, and theories of women's writing', *Contemporary Literature*, 1983, vol. 24, pp. 117–44.

R.C. Davis, 'Cixous, Spivak, and oppositional theory', *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 1992, vol. 4, pp. 29–42.

M. Diocaretz and M. Segarra (eds), *Joyful Babel: Translating Hélène Cixous*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004.

J. Dobson and G. Rye (eds), *Revisiting the Scene of Writing: New Readings of Cixous* (*Paragraph*, vol. 23:3, special issue), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.

B. Duren, 'Cixous's exorbitant texts', *SubStance*, 1981, vol. 10, pp. 39–51.

L. Gasbarrone, '"The locus for the Other": Cixous, Bakhtin, and women's writing', in K. Hohne and H. Wussow (eds), *A Dialogue of Voices: Feminist Literary Theory and Bakhtin*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, pp. 1–19.

R. Gibbons, 'To write with the use of Cixous', *New Literary History*, 2006, vol. 37, pp. 169–78.

L.A. Jacobus and R. Barreca (eds), *Hélène Cixous: Critical Impressions*, Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1999.

F.-Y. Jeannet, 'The book that you will not write: an interview with Hélène Cixous', *New Literary History*, 2006, vol. 37, pp. 249–62.

P. Kamuf, 'To give place: semi-approaches to Hélène Cixous', *Yale French Studies*, 1995, vol. 87, pp. 68–89.

C. Korsmeyer, 'Feminist aesthetics', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2008. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-aesthetics/ (accessed 25 May 2010).

M. Lydon, 'Re-translating no re-reading no, rather: rejoycing (with) Hélène Cixous', *Yale French Studies*, 1995, vol. 87, pp. 90–102.

G. Michaud, 'Derrida and Cixous: between and beyond, or "what to the letter has happened"', *New Literary History*, 2006, vol. 37, pp. 85–106.

E. Prenowitz, 'Crossing lines: Jacques Derrida and Hélène Cixous on the phone', *Discourse*, 2008, vol. 30, pp. 123–56.

F. Regard, 'Autobiography as linguistic incompetence: notes on Derrida's readings of Joyce and Cixous', *Textual Practice*, 2005, vol. 19, pp. 283–96.

S. Renshaw, *The Subject of Love: Hélène Cixous and the Feminine Divine*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009.

A. Schrift, 'Rethinking exchange: logics of the gift in Cixous and Nietzsche', *Philosophy Today*, 1996, vol. 40, pp. 197–205.

M. Segarra, 'Friendship, betrayal, and translation: Cixous and Derrida', *Mosaic*, 2007, vol. 40, pp. 91–102.

M. Shiach, *Hélène Cixous: A Politics of Writing*, London: Routledge, 1991.

S. Sellers, *Writing Differences: Readings from the Seminar of Hélène Cixous*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987.

———, *Hélène Cixous: Authorship, Autobiography and Love*, Cambridge: Polity, 1996.

P. Shurmer-Smith, 'Cixous's spaces: sensuous space in women's writing', *Cultural Geographies*, 1994, vol. 1, pp. 349–62.

H. Wilcox, K. McWaters, A. Thompson, and L.R. Williams (eds), *The Body and the Text: Hélène Cixous, Reading and Teaching*, New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990.

PART 7

Aesthetic Ontologies

Introduction

WHAT COMES AFTER POSTSTRUCTURALISM and postmodernism? Is it even possible to talk about an 'after', since both terms refer to positions which draw attention to the difficulty in standing back and claiming closure? Reports of the death of postmodernism are numerous, and there is no shortage of attempts to name and characterize the shape of culture and thought which is emerging in its place, e.g. Bourriaud's 'altermodern',[1] Eshelman's 'performatism',[2] Kirby's 'digimodernism',[3] and Lipovetsky's 'hypermodernism'.[4] While these concepts have attracted some interest, they are not represented here, largely because they represent broad theses within cultural criticism as opposed to more focused studies of aesthetics after poststructuralism and postmodernism. None of the philosophers I have included in this section – Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (with Guattari represented twice, writing independently in the second essay), Jean-Luc Nancy, Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, and Jacques Rancière – introduce a contender ism. Nevertheless, they all depart from the playful, linguistic order of poststructuralism and, against postmodernism, return to questions of the human being, our relationship with others and the world, and the role philosophy might take in addressing these questions.

Forming this section and naming it were not straightforward. All the texts included here are relatively new; the first to appear, the chapter from Deleuze and Guattari's *What is Philosophy?*, was originally published in 1991. But they haven't been grouped purely on the basis of novelty. Neither is it the case that there is a common influence or a shared commitment to a thesis or principle. I suspect that not even the distance brought by time would aid the detection of a common influence or thesis. However, what does bring them together is a shared recognition of the importance of ontology, and especially its importance for developing philosophy beyond poststructuralism. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida suggests that 'there is nothing outside the text'.[5] While it would be a mistake to interpret this as the declaration that nothing exists outside language, there is nevertheless investment in the idea that textuality, the relations, differences, and interplays between signs, is the condition which all literary and philosophical investigations must acknowledge as their foundation. The new interest in ontology asserts that we must look beyond language and textuality. Ontology is the study of what is real and, in particular, the nature of the units or relations which make up reality. The theories presented here are ontological in

that they seek to form and articulate the relations which determine the contact which 'concepts' have with other 'concepts', and the contact which 'concepts' may or may not have with what is not 'conceptual' or beyond the 'conceptual'.

I have put 'concept' in inverted commas since it is problematic, if not misleading, to give the impression that what we customarily understand by the term fits the six philosophers' intentions. The word receives a variety of uses in the history of philosophy, and is often taken to refer to ideas or contents located within the mind. However, the connotation with mind is not applicable here. Rather, a much more general sense is required: the concept as the basic unit of philosophical practice, a basic philosopheme. Key to the ontological ambition of the philosophers in this section is a questioning of the way philosophy proceeds, and the way it affects human action and conduct. When the nature of philosophy and thought is at issue, no division, distinction, content, or value can be taken for granted. As such, 'concept' is a stand-in word prefacing the fact that these philosophies will be formulating architectures and vocabularies which promote renewed understanding of the priorities that govern thought.

Decisive for this operation is how art and the aesthetic are positioned. The aesthetic is far from an after-thought. In fact, it cannot be an after-thought by definition, since the nature of thought itself is in question. Rather, the aesthetic appears in a range of roles, operating (choose your ontological terminology at this point) as a force which bears upon or that which has to be negotiated in any working out of philosophy's engagement with life. Deleuze and Guattari introduce a tripartite distinction between percept, affect, and concept, and argue philosophy's task is to invent concepts, while the role of art is to form percepts and affects, to make experience *stand on its own*. Guattari asks what forms subjectivity might take within society other than the capitalistic model of the isolated, essential subject, and articulates a model of 'deterritorialization' in which subjectivity is *continuously* sculpted and stretched by different forms of expression (from film to town planning) conceived as mechanisms of distribution. Nancy offers an ontology of the fragment, asserting that experience, meaning, and thought are never complete within any one consciousness, but always incomplete, always awaiting reaction and participation from others, but without any endpoint. Badiou develops a concept of the inaesthetic: a philosophy of art which remains philosophical while allowing the work of art to retain its 'independent existence'. Central to Agamben's thought is the question of how language might open onto itself, how we might say 'sayability', and, as a part of this project, he calls upon art to surrender its role of representation in the interests of becoming the representation of representation itself. Rancière introduces the notion of the distribution of the sensible: the thesis that the shape of experience, the way some things are clustered together and others are kept apart, is attributable to principles of ordering *in which we participate*. The fact that sensibility is distributed creates a common ground for aesthetics and politics in as much as what we think of as the *merely* or *purely* aesthetic becomes the form of politics.

Notes

1 N. Bourriaud, *Altermodern: Tate Triennial 2009*, London: Tate Publishing, 2009.
2 R. Eshelman, *Performatism, or The End of Postmodernism*, Aurora, Colorado: Davis Group, 2008.
3 A. Kirby, *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure Our Culture*, New York: Continuum, 2009.
4 G. Lipovetsky with S. Charles, *Hypermodern Times*, trans. A. Brown, Cambridge: Polity, 2005.
5 J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. Spivak, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, p. 158.

Chapter 35

GILLES DELEUZE AND FÉLIX GUATTARI

INTRODUCTION

The task of philosophy, according to Deleuze (1925–95) and Guattari (1930–92), is to invent concepts. Deleuze and Guattari seek to bring particularity to the concept: to transform the concept from being a principle of reduction or generalization, to being a generator of poetic and unexpected association. Deleuze's studies of Nietzsche and Kant – *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962) and *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties* (1963) – pay special attention to the relationship between the concept and the particular. Although Kant takes the radical step of integrating concepts with the diversity of the sensible manifold, he nevertheless succumbs to the conceptual homogenization of the particular, according to Deleuze, by equating the pure concepts of the understanding with the concept of an *object in general*.[1] Nietzsche's influence is more positive, however, Deleuze thinks, for he removes altogether the distinction between concept and object and, in its place, introduces an irresolvable dynamic of forces. The essay 'On Truth and Lie in an Extramoral Sense' (1873) above is a good demonstration of how Nietzsche replaces order with play.

The creation of concepts is part of Deleuze and Guattari's ontology of immanence. They reject dualist metaphysics, any system of thought which relies on a binary opposition for its foundation, such as mind–world or subject–object, and instead formulate a dynamic ontology in which identities (of beings, objects, ideas) are formed through a series of interacting differences, where identities take shape as expressions or intensities or folds within this play of difference. Immanence is the 'plane' of difference out of which identities form; it is, as Colebrook writes, 'a pure flow of life and perception without any distinct perceivers'.[2] This ontology of active formation is influenced heavily by the philosophies of Baruch Spinoza, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Henri Bergson. The four figures are linked by their distance from Cartesian metaphysics. In quite different ways, they offer worldviews in which human life is not ascribed to objects or regions but is rather articulated as a series of relations or concentrations. For example, a key Nietzschean dimension within Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on the creation of concepts is the recognition that, in an ontology without a pre-determined structure, without any joints, so to speak, shape, order, and form have to be made or, in a more celebratory mode, *can be made*.

The eighteenth-century philosophies of David Hume and Immanuel Kant are also important for Deleuze. He refers to his philosophy as 'transcendental empiricism'. For some philosophers, the term might sound like an oxymoron since it throws together the empiricism of Hume with the transcendental philosophy of Kant, where the latter is meant to address problems created by alleged gaps in the former. But it is precisely this sense of philosophical impropriety which is fruitful for Deleuze. In the case of Kant's transcendental idealism, 'transcendental' refers not to a transcendent subject which sits above or beyond experience, but rather to the conditions which

have to apply for continuous subjective experience *to be possible*, something Hume could only establish (weakly, in Kant's view) as a matter of custom.

However, Deleuze does not even want to endorse the notion of continuous subjectivity, for this would simply reinstitute the binary opposition of a subject and its other, although the transcendental element of what has to apply for something *to be possible* is significant, as will become apparent shortly. Instead, he allies himself with empiricism understood as a philosophy of pure experience, of experience without a human subject, as it is for Hume. It is in fact a problem for Hume that whenever

> I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception.[3]

But experience without a subject is exactly what Deleuze wants. Experience, Mullarkey declares, is 'immanent to itself and not to an individualised subject' and so, as a consequence, with Deleuze, 'one does not ask how the subject gains its experience but how experience gives us a subject'.[4] Transcendental empiricism, as a philosophy of immanence, is not about the experiences of a pre-constituted subject (myself or an other), but about those events that disrupt experience in a way that my subjectivity *becomes possible*. The principal forms of experiential disruption are percepts, affects, and concepts.

'Percept, Affect, and Concept' is from *What is Philosophy?* (1991), co-authored by Deleuze and the psychoanalyst Félix Guattari.[5] It is the fourth and final time they worked together.[6] Collaboration as a method of enquiry is appropriate for their philosophy. It frees the author from the responsibility of exercising complete control over a text, and encourages a more discursive, conversational form of thought: each author can respond to asides and excursions from the other. Deleuze has said of his working relationship with Guattari: 'We don't work, we negotiate. We were never in the same rhythm, we were always out of step.'[7] Disjunction or a lack of co-ordination is sometimes to be desired. 'Plant' or 'growth' metaphors play an important role in plotting the course of their ideas. Thought in the history of philosophy, they assert, is 'tree-like': individuals are attached to a concept or ideas are attached to a central thesis, like branches to a trunk.[8] In contrast, they propose a conception of thought based on the 'rhizome': an underground stem that grows horizontally and pushes up lateral shoots; claims are linked not by continuous, vertical progression, but through leaps of association and the relation of seemingly unconnected ideas. This has the effect of making the writing performative in a fashion comparable to Adorno or Bataille or Derrida. The writing style itself is used to *make a point* rather than just qualify the way the writer organizes his words to *describe the point*.

As the penultimate chapter of *What is Philosophy?*, 'Percept, Affect, and Concept' evokes earlier discussion and draws together certain themes. However, given Deleuze and Guattari's 'rhizomic' style, and the fact that it is not the conclusion to the book, the chapter has enough internal coherence to be read independently. The book examines the nature of philosophy and its relationship with art and science. Philosophy, they argue, is the creation of concepts in the sense, for example, that Kant introduces a new concept of time.[9] Concepts have to be made: they are 'not waiting for us ready-made, like heavenly bodies. There is no heaven for concepts. They must be invented, fabricated, or rather created and would be nothing without their creator's signature.'[10] Art, on the other hand, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the formation of percepts and affects: art makes experience *stand on its own*, distinct from the artist and her original experience; perception is made to stand on its own, apart from its object, as 'percept', and affection is given form distinct from the moment as 'affect'. Art is 'a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself'.

Art and philosophy, they claim, 'intersect and intertwine but without synthesis or identification'.[11] This is because concepts and sensations are overlapping regions. Deleuze and Guattari's definition of a concept is a crucial premise here. The concept, they affirm, is not an abstract, isolated entity but a principle of interrelationship. Each one not only contains 'bits or components that come from other concepts' but also links up with these others in a state or 'plane' of mutual support, co-ordination, and articulation. A concept is thus a 'heterogenesis':

> an ordering of its components by zones of neighbourhood. It is ordinal, an intension present in all the features that make it up. The concept is in a state of survey [*survol*] in relation to its components, endlessly traversing them according to an order without distance.[12]

Comparable with the essays from Blanchot and Vattimo above, Deleuze and Guattari conduct what amounts to a 'topography of thought': an examination of the correspondences and counterpoints which emerge when the shape and direction of thought are influenced by the spatial, material properties introduced by metaphors. In this instance, they explore the ideas and associations brought to light by conceiving of aesthetic experience as a plane: that which is made to intersect with other surfaces, and against which nuances and details are allowed to stand out. From the opening reference to a canvas, to the significance given by phenomenology to architectural surfaces, to the plane as a frame for composition, Deleuze and Guattari create a conceptual structure which invites us to consider art as *the contrasts and connections made by the structure*. Through contrast and connection, art and philosophy are shown to interlock *yet maintain their non-identity*: 'sensation itself becomes sensation of concept' and 'concept becomes concept of sensation' yet these relationships cannot exist without there being an element which is 'still to come, still indeterminate or unknown'.

The essay is also notable for interweaving many different aspects of twentieth-century aesthetic theory. Adorno's theory of knowledge in *Negative Dialectics* (1966) would seem to be an influence. On this account, concepts exist in a constellational relationship around an object, giving us plural insights into its being while preserving a level of indeterminacy. Deleuze and Guattari actually describe their notion of the concept as 'the contour, the configuration, the constellation of an event to come'.[13] They also share phenomenology's interest in Cézanne. For Merleau-Ponty, the tessellated planes in Cézanne's paintings display the limits and possibilities of the artist's (and the viewer's) physical immersion in the world and, for Deleuze and Guattari, they become the 'sections' of a house – 'the pieces of differently oriented planes' – that 'provide flesh with its framework' and 'give sensation the power to stand on its own within autonomous *frames*'.[14] With the 'frame', we are reminded of Derrida's 'Parergon' and the question of what is inside and what is outside a concept.

Notes

1 This, it needs pointing out, is based upon a highly selective and deliberately 'associational' reading of Kant which ignores many of his explicit intentions and his arguments for the claim that generality anticipates particularity.
2 C. Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze*, London: Routledge, 2002, p. 74.
3 D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 252.
4 J. Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy: An Outline*, London: Continuum, 2006, p. 14.
5 G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. H. Tomlinson and G. Burchill, London: Verso, 1996.
6 Their other three collaborations are: *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia 1* (1972), trans. R. Hurley *et al.*, New York: Viking Press, 1977; *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1975), trans. B.

Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987; and *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia 2* (1980), trans. B. Massumi, London: Athlone, 1988.

7 G. Deleuze and C. Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 17, and quoted by H. Tomlinson and G. Burchill in their 'Translators' introduction' to *What is Philosophy?*, p. viii.

8 The 'tree-like' metaphor originally features in Deleuze and Guattari's critique of Freud but is nonetheless representative of Deleuze's stance with regard to philosophy's orthodox conception of thought. See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia 1*.

9 Instead of the Newtonian concept of a linear succession of episodes, Kant presents time as a three-fold principle of anticipation, retention, and succession, fundamental to the organization of experience.

10 Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 5.

11 Ibid., pp. 198–99.

12 Ibid., p. 20.

13 Ibid., p. 32.

14 For Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of Cézanne, see Merleau-Ponty's 'Eye and Mind', in this *Reader*.

■ ■ ■

PERCEPT, AFFECT, AND CONCEPT

GILLES DELEUZE AND FÉLIX GUATTARI

The young man will smile on the canvas for as long as the canvas lasts. Blood throbs under the skin of this woman's face, the wind shakes a branch, a group of men prepare to leave. In a novel or a film, the young man will stop smiling, but he will start to smile again when we turn to this page or that moment. Art preserves, and it is the only thing in the world that is preserved. It preserves and is preserved in itself (*quid juris?*), although actually it lasts no longer than its support and materials – stone, canvas, chemical color, and so on (*quid facti?*). The young girl maintains the pose that she has had for five thousand years, a gesture that no longer depends on whoever made it. The air still has the turbulence, the gust of wind, and the light that it had that day last year, and it no longer depends on whoever was breathing it that morning. If art preserves it does not do so like industry, by adding a substance to make the thing last. The thing became independent of its 'model' from the start, but it is also independent of other possible personae who are themselves artists-things, personae of painting breathing this air of painting. And it is no less independent of the viewer or hearer, who only experience it after, if they have the strength for it. What about the creator? It is independent of the creator through the self-positing of the created, which is preserved in itself. What is preserved – the thing or the work of art – is *a bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects.*

Percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them. Sensations, percepts, and affects are beings whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived. They could be said to exist in the absence of man because man, as he is caught in stone, on the canvas, or by words, is himself a compound of percepts and affects. The work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself.

Harmonies are affects. Consonance and dissonance, harmonies of tone or color, are affects of music or painting. Rameau emphasized the identity of harmony and affect. The artist creates blocs of percepts and affects, but the only law of creation is that the compound must stand up on its own. The artist's greatest difficulty is to make it *stand up on its own*. Sometimes this requires what is, from the viewpoint of an implicit model, from the viewpoint of lived perceptions and affections, great geometrical improbability, physical imperfection, and organic abnormality. But

these sublime errors accede to the necessity of art if they are internal means of standing up (or sitting or lying). There is a pictorial possibility that has nothing to do with physical possibility and that endows the most acrobatic postures with the sense of balance. On the other hand, many works that claim to be art do not stand up for an instant. Standing up alone does not mean having a top and a bottom or being upright (for even houses are drunk and askew); it is only the act by which the compound of created sensations is preserved in itself – a monument, but one that may be contained in a few marks or a few lines, like a poem by Emily Dickinson. Of the sketch of an old, worn-out ass, 'How marvellous! It's done with two strokes, but set on immutable bases,' where the sensation bears witness all the more to years of 'persistent, tenacious, disdainful work.'[1] In music, the minor mode is a test that is especially essential since it sets the musician the challenge of wresting it from its ephemeral combinations in order to make it solid and durable, self-preserving, even in acrobatic positions. The sound must be held no less in its extinction than in its production and development. Through his admiration of Pissaro and Monet, what Cézanne had against the Impressionists was that the optical mixture of colors was not enough to create a compound sufficiently 'solid and lasting like the art of the museums,' like 'the perpetuity of blood' in Rubens.[2] This is a way of speaking, because Cézanne does not add something that would preserve Impressionism; he seeks instead a different solidity, other bases and other blocs.

The question of whether drugs help the artist to create these beings of sensation, whether they are part of art's internal means that really lead us to the 'doors of perception' and reveal to us percepts and affects, is given a general answer inasmuch as drug-induced compounds are usually extraordinarily flaky, unable to preserve themselves, and break up as soon as they are made or looked at. We may also admire children's drawings, or rather be moved by them, but they rarely stand up and only resemble Klee or Miró if we do not look at them for long. The paintings of the mad, on the contrary, often hold up, but on condition of being crammed full, with no empty space remaining. However, blocs need pockets of air and emptiness, because even the void is sensation. All sensation is composed with the void in composing itself with itself, and everything holds together on earth and in the air, and preserves the void, is preserved in the void by preserving itself. A canvas may be completely full to the point that even the air no longer gets through, but it is only a work of art if, as the Chinese painter says, it nonetheless saves enough empty space for horses to prance in (even if this is only through the variety of planes).[3]

We paint, sculpt, compose, and write with sensations. We paint, sculpt, compose, and write sensations. As percepts, sensations are not perceptions referring to an object (reference): if they resemble something it is with a resemblance produced with their own methods; and the smile on the canvas is made solely with colors, lines, shadow, and light. If resemblance haunts the work of art, it is because sensation refers only to its material: it is the percept or affect of the material itself, the smile of oil, the gesture of fired clay, the thrust of metal, the crouch of Romanesque stone, and the ascent of Gothic stone. The material is so varied in each case (canvas support, paintbrush or equivalent agent, color in the tube) that it is difficult to say where in fact the material ends and sensation begins; preparation of the canvas, the track of the brush's hair, and many other things besides are obviously part of the sensation. How could the sensation be preserved without a material capable of lasting? And however short the time it lasts, this time is considered as a duration. We will see how the plane of the material ascends irresistibly and invades the plane of composition of the sensations themselves to the point of being part of them or indiscernible from them. It is in this sense that the painter is said to be a painter and nothing but a painter, 'with color seized as if just pressed out of the tube, with the imprint of each hair of his brush,' with this blue that is not a water blue 'but a liquid paint blue.' And yet, in principle at least, sensation is not the same thing as the material. What is preserved by right is not the material, which constitutes only the *de facto* condition, but, insofar as this condition is satisfied (that is, that canvas, color, or

stone does not crumble into dust), it is the percept or affect that is preserved in itself. Even if the material lasts for only a few seconds it will give sensation the power to exist and be preserved in itself *in the eternity that coexists with this short duration*. So long as the material lasts, the sensation enjoys an eternity in those very moments. Sensation is not realized in the material without the material passing completely into the sensation, into the percept or affect. All the material becomes expressive. It is the affect that is metallic, crystalline, stony, and so on; and the sensation is not colored but, as Cézanne said, coloring. That is why those who are nothing but painters are also more than painters, because they 'bring before us, in front of the fixed canvas,' not the resemblance but the pure sensation 'of a tortured flower, of a landscape slashed, pressed, and plowed,' giving back 'the water of the painting to nature.'[4] One material is exchanged for another, like the violin for the piano, one kind of brush for another, oil for pastel, only inasmuch as the compound of sensations requires it. And, however strong an artist's interest in science, a compound of sensations will never be mistaken for the 'mixtures' of material that science determines in states of affairs, as is clearly shown by the 'optical mixture' of the impressionists.

By means of the material, the aim of art is to wrest the percept from perceptions of objects and the states of a perceiving subject, to wrest the affect from affections as the transition from one state to another: to extract a bloc of sensations, a pure being of sensations. A method is needed, and this varies with every artist and forms part of the work: we need only compare Proust and Pessoa, who invent different procedures in the search for the sensation as being.[5] In this respect the writer's position is no different from that of the painter, musician, or architect. The writer's specific materials are words and syntax, the created syntax that ascends irresistibly into his work and passes into sensation. Memory, which summons forth only old perceptions, is obviously not enough to get away from lived perceptions; neither is an involuntary memory that adds reminiscence as the present's preserving factor. Memory plays a small part in art (even and especially in Proust). It is true that every work of art is a *monument*, but here the monument is not something commemorating a past, it is a bloc of present sensations that owe their preservation only to themselves and that provide the event with the compound that celebrates it. The monument's action is not memory but fabulation. We write not with childhood memories but through blocs of childhood that are the becoming-child of the present. Music is full of them. It is not memory that is needed but a complex material that is found not in memory but in words and sounds: 'Memory, I hate you.' We attain to the percept and the affect only as to autonomous and sufficient beings that no longer owe anything to those who experience or have experienced them: Combray like it never was, is, or will be lived; Combray as cathedral or monument.

If methods are very different, not only in the different arts but in different artists, we can nevertheless characterize some great monumental types, or 'varieties,' of compounds of sensations: *the vibration*, which characterizes the simple sensation (but it is already durable or compound, because it rises and falls, implies a constitutive difference of level, follows an invisible thread that is more nervous than cerebral); *the embrace or the clinch* (when two sensations resonate in each other by embracing each other so tightly in a clinch of what are no more than 'energies'); *withdrawal*, *division*, *distension* (when, on the contrary, two sensations draw apart, release themselves, but so as now to be brought together by the light, the air, or the void that sinks between them or into them, like a wedge that is at once so dense and so light that it extends in every direction as the distance grows, and forms a bloc that no longer needs a support). Vibrating sensation – coupling sensation – opening or splitting, hollowing out sensation. These types are displayed almost in their pure state in sculpture, with its sensations of stone, marble, or metal, which vibrate according to the order of strong and weak beats, projections and hollows, its powerful clinches that intertwine them, its development of large spaces between groups or within a single group where we no longer know whether it is the light or the air that sculpts or is sculpted.

The novel has often risen to the percept – not perception of the moor in Hardy but the moor as percept; oceanic percepts in Melville; urban percepts, or those of the mirror, in Virginia Woolf. The landscape sees. Generally speaking, what great writer has not been able to create these beings of sensation, which preserve in themselves the hour of a day, a moment's degree of warmth (Faulkner's hills, Tolstoy's or Chekhov's steppes)? The percept is the landscape before man, in the absence of man. But why do we say this, since in all these cases the landscape is not independent of the supposed perceptions of the characters and, through them, of the author's perceptions and memories? How could the town exist without or before man, or the mirror without the old woman it reflects, even if she does not look at herself in it? This is Cézanne's enigma, which has often been commented upon: 'Man absent from but entirely within the landscape.' Characters can only exist, and the author can only create them, because they do not perceive but have passed into the landscape and are themselves part of the compound of sensations. Ahab really does have perceptions of the sea, but only because he has entered into a relationship with Moby Dick that makes him a becoming-whale and forms a compound of sensations that no longer needs anyone: ocean. It is Mrs. Dalloway who perceives the town – but because she has passed into the town like 'a knife through everything' and becomes imperceptible herself. *Affects are precisely these nonhuman becomings of man*, just as percepts – including the town – are *nonhuman landscapes of nature*. Not a 'minute of the world passes,' says Cézanne, that we will preserve if we do not 'become that minute.'[6] We are not in the world, we become with the world; we become by contemplating it. Everything is vision, becoming. We become universes. Becoming animal, plant, molecular, becoming zero. Kleist is no doubt the author who most wrote with affects, using them like stones or weapons, seizing them in becomings of sudden petrification or infinite acceleration, in the becoming-bitch of Penthesilea and her hallucinated percepts. This is true of all the arts: what strange becomings unleash music across its 'melodic landscapes' and its 'rhythmic characters,' as Messiaen says, by combining the molecular and the cosmic, stars, atoms, and birds in the same being of sensation? What terror haunts Van Gogh's head, caught in a becoming-sunflower? In each case style is needed – the writer's syntax, the musician's modes and rhythms, the painter's lines and colors – to raise lived perceptions to the percept and lived affections to the affect.

We dwell on the art of the novel because it is the source of a misunderstanding: many people think that novels can be created with our perceptions and affections, our memories and archives, our travels and fantasies, our children and parents, with the interesting characters we have met and, above all, the interesting character who is inevitably oneself (who isn't interesting?), and finally with our opinions holding it all together. If need be, we can invoke great authors who have done nothing but recount their lives – Thomas Wolfe or Henry Miller. Generally we get composite works in which we move about a great deal but in search of a father who is found only in ourself: the journalist's novel. We are not spared the least detail, in the absence of any really artistic work. The cruelty we may have seen and the despair we have experienced do not need to be transformed a great deal in order to produce yet again the opinion that generally emerges about the difficulties of communication. Rossellini saw this as a reason for giving up art: art was allowing itself to be invaded too much by infantilism and cruelty, both cruel and doleful, whining and satisfied at the same time, so that it was better to abandon it.[7] More interestingly, Rossellini saw the same thing taking place in painting. But it is literature primarily that has constantly maintained an equivocal relationship with the lived. We may well have great powers of observation and much imagination, but is it possible to write with perceptions, affections, and opinions? Even in the least autobiographical novels we see the confrontation and intersection of the opinions of a multitude of characters, all in accordance with the perceptions and affections of each character with his social situation and individual adventures, and all of it swept up in the vast current of the author's

opinion, which, however, divides itself so as to rebound on the characters, or which hides itself so that readers can form their own: this is indeed how Bakhtin's great theory of the novel begins (happily it does not end there; it is precisely the 'parodic' basis of the novel).

Creative fabulation has nothing to do with a memory, however exaggerated, or with a fantasy. In fact, the artist, including the novelist, goes beyond the perceptual states and affective transitions of the lived. The artist is a seer, a becomer. How would he recount what happened to him, or what he imagines, since he is a shadow? He has seen something in life that is too great, too unbearable also, and the mutual embrace of life with what threatens it, so that the corner of nature or districts of the town that he sees, along with their characters, accede to a vision that, through them, composes the percepts of that life, of that moment, shattering lived perceptions into a sort of cubism, a sort of simultaneism, of harsh or crepuscular light, of purple or blue, which have no other object or subject than themselves. 'What we call styles,' said Giacometti, 'are those visions fixed in time and space.' It is always a question of freeing life wherever it is imprisoned, or of tempting it into an uncertain combat. The death of the porcupine in Lawrence and the death of the mole in Kafka are almost unbearable acts of the novelist. Sometimes it is necessary to lie down on the earth, like the painter does also, in order to get to the 'motif,' that is to say, the percept. Percepts can be telescopic or microscopic, giving characters and landscapes giant dimensions as if they were swollen by a life that no lived perception can attain. Balzac's greatness. It is of little importance whether these characters *are* mediocre: they *become* giants, like Bouvard and Pecuchet, Bloom and Molly, Mercier and Camier, without ceasing to be what they are. It is by dint of mediocrity, even of stupidity or infamy, that they are able to become not simple (they are never simple) but gigantic. Even dwarves and cripples will do: all fabulation is the fabrication of giants.[8] Whether mediocre or grandiose, they are too alive to be livable or lived. Thomas Wolfe extracts a giant from his father, and Henry Miller extracts a dark planet from the city. Wolfe may describe the people of old Catawba through their stupid opinions and their mania for discussion, but what he does is set up the secret monument of their solitude, their desert, their eternal earth, and their forgotten, unnoticed lives. Faulkner may also cry out: oh, men of Yoknapatawpha. It is said that the monumental novelist is himself 'inspired' by the lived, and this is true: M. de Charlus closely resembles Montesquiou, but between Montesquiou and M. de Charlus there is ultimately roughly the same relationship as between the barking animal-dog and the celestial constellation-Dog.

How can a moment of the world be rendered durable or made to exist by itself? Virginia Woolf provides an answer that is as valid for painting and music as it is for writing: 'Saturate every atom,' 'eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity,' everything that adheres to our current and lived perceptions, everything that nourishes the mediocre novelist; and keep only the saturation that gives us the percept. 'It must include nonsense, fact, sordidity: *but made transparent*'; 'I want to put practically everything in; yet to saturate.'[9] Through having reached the percept as 'the sacred source,' through having seen Life in the living or the Living in the lived, the novelist or painter returns breathless and with bloodshot eyes. They are athletes – not athletes who train their bodies and cultivate the lived, no matter how many writers have succumbed to the idea of sport as a way of heightening art and life, but bizarre athletes of the 'fasting-artist' type, or the 'great Swimmer' who does not know how to swim. It is not an organic or muscular athleticism but its inorganic double, 'an affective Athleticism,' an athleticism of becoming that reveals only forces that are not its own – 'plastic specter.'[10] In this respect artists are like philosophers. What little health they possess is often too fragile, not because of their illnesses or neuroses but because they have seen something in life that is too much for anyone, too much for themselves, and that has put on them the quiet mark of death. But this something is also the source or breath that supports them through the illnesses of the lived (what Nietzsche called health). 'Perhaps one day we will know that there wasn't any art but only medicine.'[11]

The affect goes beyond affections no less than the percept goes beyond perceptions. The affect is not the passage from one lived state to another but man's nonhuman becoming. Ahab does not imitate Moby Dick, and Penthesilea does not 'act' the bitch: becoming is neither an imitation nor an experienced sympathy, nor even an imaginary identification. It is not resemblance, although there is resemblance. But it is only a produced resemblance. Rather, becoming is an extreme contiguity within a coupling of two sensations without resemblance or, on the contrary, in the distance of a light that captures both of them in a single reflection. André Dhôtel knew how to place his characters in strange plant-becomings, becoming tree or aster: this is not the transformation of one into the other, he says, but something passing from one to the other.[12] This something can be specified only as sensation. It is a zone of indetermination, of indiscernibility, as if things, beasts, and persons (Ahab and Moby Dick, Penthesilea and the bitch) endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation. This is what is called an *affect*. In *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities*, Pierre reaches the zone in which he can no longer distinguish himself from his half-sister, Isabelle, and he becomes woman. Life alone creates such zones where living beings whirl around, and only art can reach and penetrate them in its enterprise of co-creation. This is because from the moment that the material passes into sensation, as in a Rodin sculpture, art itself lives on these zones of indetermination. They are blocs. Painting needs more than the skill of the draftsman who notes resemblances between human and animal forms and gets us to witness their transformation: on the contrary, it needs the power of a ground that can dissolve forms and impose the existence of a zone in which we no longer know which is animal and which human, because something like the triumph or monument of their nondistinction rises up – as in Goya or even Daumier or Redon. The artist must create the syntactical or plastic methods and materials necessary for such a great undertaking, which re-creates everywhere the primitive swamps of life (Goya's use of etching and aquatint). The affect certainly does not undertake a return to origins, as if beneath civilization we would rediscover, in terms of resemblance, the persistence of a bestial or primitive humanity. It is within our civilization's temperate surroundings that equatorial or glacial zones, which avoid the differentiation of genus, sex, orders, and kingdoms, currently function and prosper. It is a question only of ourselves, here and now; but what is animal, vegetable, mineral, or human in us is now indistinct – even though we ourselves will especially acquire distinction. The maximum determination comes from this bloc of neighborhood like a flash.

It is precisely because opinions are functions of lived experience that they claim to have a certain knowledge of affections. Opinions prevail on human passions and their eternity. But, as Bergson observed, one has the impression that opinion misjudges affective states and groups them together or separates them wrongly.[13] It is not even enough to do what psychoanalysis does and give forbidden objects to itemized affections or substitute simple ambivalences for zones of indetermination. A great novelist is above all an artist who invents unknown or unrecognized affects and brings them to light as the becoming of his characters: the crepuscular states of knights in the novels of Chrétien de Troyes (in relation to a possible concept of chivalry), the states of almost catatonic 'rest' that merge with duty according to Mme de Lafayette (in relation to a concept of quietism), on up to Beckett's state, as affects that are all the more imposing as they are poor in affections. When Zola suggests to his readers, 'take note; my characters do not suffer from remorse,' we should see not the expression of a physiologist's thesis but the ascription of new affects that arise with the creation of characters in naturalism: the Mediocre, the Pervert, the Beast (and what Zola calls instinct is inseparable from a becoming-animal). When Emily Brontë traces the bond between Heathcliff and Catherine, she invents a violent affect, like a kinship between two wolves, which above all should not be mistaken for love. When Proust seems to be describing jealousy in such minute detail, he is inventing an affect,

because he constantly reverses the order in affections presupposed by opinion, according to which jealousy would be an unhappy consequence of love: for him, on the contrary, jealousy is finality, destination; and if we must love, it is so that we can be jealous, jealousy being the meaning of signs – affect as semiology. When Claude Simon describes the incredible passive love of the earth-woman, he sculpts an affect of clay. He may say, 'this is my mother,' and we believe him since he says it, but it is a mother who has passed into sensation and to whom he erects a monument so original that she no longer has an ascribable relationship with her real son but, more distantly, with another created character, Faulkner's Eula. It is in this way that, from one writer to another, great creative affects can link up or diverge, within compounds of sensations that transform themselves, vibrate, couple, or split apart: it is these beings of sensation that account for the artist's relationship with a public, for the relation between different works by the same artist, or even for a possible affinity between artists.[14] The artist is always adding new varieties to the world. Beings of sensation are varieties, just as the concept's beings are variations, and the function's beings are variables.

It should be said of all art that, in relation to the percepts or visions they give us, artists are presenters of affects, the inventors and creators of affects. They not only create them in their work, they give them to us and make us become with them, they draw us into the compound. Van Gogh's sunflowers are becomings, like Dürer's thistles or Bonnard's mimosas. Redon entitled a lithograph 'There was perhaps a first vision attempted in the flower.' The flower sees – pure and simple terror: 'And do you see that sunflower looking in through the bedroom window? It stares into my room all day.'[15] A floral history of painting is like the endlessly and continuously resumed creation of the percepts and affects of flowers. Whether through words, colors, sounds, or stone, art is the language of sensations. Art does not have opinions. Art undoes the triple organization of perceptions, affections, and opinions in order to substitute a monument composed of percepts, affects, and blocs of sensations that take the place of language. The writer uses words, but by creating a syntax that makes them pass into sensation that makes the standard language stammer, tremble, cry, or even sing: this is the style, the 'tone,' the language of sensations, or the foreign language within language that summons forth a people to come, 'Oh, people of old Catawba,' 'Oh, people of Yoknapatawpha.' The writer twists language, makes it vibrate, seizes hold of it, and rends it in order to wrest the percept from perceptions, the affect from affections, the sensation from opinion – in view, one hopes, of that still-missing people.

> I repeat – my memory is not loving but inimical, and it labors not to reproduce but to distance the past. What was it my family wished to say? I do not know. It was tongue-tied from birth – but it had, nevertheless, something that it might have said. Over my head and over the head of many of my contemporaries there hangs the congenital tongue-tie. We were not taught to speak but to babble – and only by listening to the swelling noise of the age and bleached by the foam on the crest of its wave did we acquire a language.[16]

This is, precisely, the task of all art and, from colors and sounds, both music and painting similarly extract new harmonies, new plastic or melodic landscapes, and new rhythmic characters that raise them to the height of the earth's song and the cry of humanity: that which constitutes tone, health, becoming, a visual and sonorous bloc. A monument does not commemorate or celebrate something that happened but confides to the ear of the future the persistent sensations that embody the event: the constantly renewed suffering of men and women, their re-created protestations, their constantly resumed struggle. Will this all be in vain because suffering is eternal and revolutions do not survive their victory? But the success of a revolution resides only in itself, precisely in the vibrations, clinches, and openings it gave to men and women at the

moment of its making and that composes in itself a monument that is always in the process of becoming, like those tumuli to which each new traveler adds a stone. The victory of a revolution is immanent and consists in the new bonds it installs between people, even if these bonds last no longer than the revolution's fused material and quickly give way to division and betrayal.

Aesthetic figures, and the style that creates them, have nothing to do with rhetoric. They are sensations: percepts and affects, landscapes and faces, visions and becomings. But is not the philosophical concept defined by becoming, and almost in the same terms? Still, aesthetic figures are not the same as conceptual personae. It may be that they pass into one another, in either direction, like Igitur or Zarathustra, but this is insofar as there are sensations of concepts and concepts of sensations. It is not the same becoming. Sensory becoming is the action by which something or someone is ceaselessly becoming-other (while continuing to be what they are), sunflower or Ahab, whereas conceptual becoming is the action by which the common event itself eludes what is. Conceptual becoming is heterogeneity grasped in an absolute form; sensory becoming is otherness caught in a matter of expression. The monument does not actualize the virtual event but incorporates or embodies it: it gives it a body, a life, a universe. This was how Proust defined the art-monument by that life higher than the 'lived,' by its 'qualitative differences,' its 'universes' that construct their own limits, their distances and proximities, their constellations and the blocs of sensations they put into motion – Rembrandt-universe or Debussy-universe. These universes are neither virtual nor actual; they are possibles, the possible as aesthetic category ('the possible or I shall suffocate'), the existence of the possible, whereas events are the reality of the virtual, forms of a thought-Nature that survey every possible universe. This is not to say that the concept precedes sensation in principle: even a concept of sensation must be created with its own means, and a sensation exists in its possible universe without the concept necessarily existing in its absolute form.

Can sensation be assimilated to an original opinion, to *Urdoxa* as the world's foundation or immutable basis? Phenomenology finds sensation in perceptual and affective 'a priori materials' that transcend the perceptions and affections of the lived: Van Gogh's yellow or Cézanne's innate sensations. As we have seen, phenomenology must become the phenomenology of art because the immanence of the lived to a transcendental subject must be expressed in transcendent functions that not only determine experience in general but traverse the lived itself here and now, and are embodied in it by constituting living sensations. The being of sensation, the bloc of percept and affect, will appear as the unity or reversibility of feeling and felt, their intimate intermingling like hands clasped together: it is the flesh that, at the same time, is freed from the lived body, the perceived world, and the intentionality of one toward the other that is still too tied to experience; whereas flesh gives us the being of sensation and bears the original opinion distinct from the judgment of experience – flesh of the world and flesh of the body that are exchanged as correlates, ideal coincidence.[17] A curious Fleshism inspires this final avatar of phenomenology and plunges it into the mystery of the incarnation. It is both a pious and a sensual notion, a mixture of sensuality and religion, without which, perhaps, flesh could not stand up by itself (it would slide down the bones, as in Bacon's figures). The question of whether flesh is adequate to art can be put in this way: can it support percept and affect, can it constitute the being of sensation, or must it not itself be supported and pass into other powers of life?

Flesh is not sensation, although it is involved in revealing it. We spoke too quickly when we said that sensation embodies. Sometimes flesh is painted with pink (superimpositions of red and white), and sometimes with broken tones [*tons rompus*[18]], a juxtaposition of complementaries in unequal proportions. But what constitutes sensation is the becoming animal or plant, which wells up like a flayed beast or peeled fruit beneath the bands of pink in the most graceful, delicate nude, Venus in the mirror; or which suddenly emerges in the fusion, firing, or casting

of broken tones, like the zone of indiscernibility of beast and man. Perhaps it would be an interference or chaos, were there not a second element to make the flesh hold fast. Flesh is only the thermometer of a becoming. The flesh is too tender. The second element is not so much bone or skeletal structure as house or framework. The body blossoms in the house (or an equivalent, a spring, a grove). Now, what defines the house are 'sections,' that is to say, the pieces of differently oriented planes that provide flesh with its framework – foreground and background, horizontal and vertical sections, left and right, straight and oblique, rectilinear or curved.[19] These sections are walls but also floors, doors, windows, French windows, and mirrors, which give sensation the power to stand on its own within autonomous *frames*. They are the sides of the bloc of sensation. There are certainly two signs of the genius of great painters, as well as of their humility: the respect, almost dread, with which they approach and enter into color; and the care with which they join together the sections or planes on which the type of depth depends. Without this respect and care painting is nothing, lacking work and thought. The difficult part is not to join hands but to join planes – to produce bulging with joined planes or, on the contrary, to break them open or cut them off. The two problems, the architecture of planes and the regime of color, are often mixed up. As for the joining of horizontal and vertical planes in Cézanne, 'Planes in color, planes! The colored place where the heart of the planes is fused.' No two great painters, or even œuvres, work in the same way. However, there are tendencies in a painter: in Giacometti, for example, the receding horizontal planes differ from right to left and seem to come together on the thing (the flesh of the small apple), but like a pincer that would pull it backward and make it disappear if a vertical plane, of which we see only the thread without thickness, did not fix it, checking it at the last moment, giving it a durable existence, in the form of a long pin passing through it and rendering it spindly in turn. The house takes part in an entire becoming. It is life, the 'nonorganic life of things.' In every way possible, the house-sensation is defined by the joining of planes in accordance with a thousand orientations. The house itself (or its equivalent) is the finite junction of colored planes.

The third element is the universe, the cosmos. Not only does the open house communicate with the landscape, through a window or a mirror, but the most shut-up house opens onto a universe. Monet's house finds itself endlessly caught up by the plant forces of an unrestrained garden, a cosmos of roses. A universe-cosmos is not flesh. Neither is it sections, joined up parts of planes, or differently oriented planes, although it may be constituted by the connection of every plane to infinity. But ultimately the universe appears as the area of plain, uniform color [*l'aplat*[20]], the single great plane, the colored void, the monochrome infinite. The French window, as in Matisse, now opens only onto an area of plain, uniform black. The flesh, or rather the figure, is no longer the inhabitant of the place, of the house, but of the universe that supports the house (becoming). *It is like a passage from the finite to the infinite*, but also from territory to deterritorialization. It is indeed the moment of the infinite: infinitely varied infinites. In Van Gogh, Gauguin, or, today, Bacon, we see the immediate tension between flesh and the area of plain, uniform color surging forth, between the flows of broken tones [*tons rompus*] and the infinite band of a pure, homogeneous, vivid, and saturated color ('instead of painting the ordinary wall of the mean room, I paint infinity, a plain background of the richest, intensest blue').[21] It is true that the monochrome area of plain color is something other than a background. And when painting wants to start again at zero, by constructing the percept as a minimum before the void, or by bringing it closer to the maximum of the concept, it works with monochrome freed from any house or flesh. Blue in particular takes on the infinite and turns the percept into a 'cosmic sensibility' or into that which is most conceptual or 'propositional' in nature – color in the absence of man, man who has passed into color. But if the blue (or black or white) is exactly the same within a picture, or from one picture to another, then it is the painter who becomes

blue – 'Yves the monochrome' – in accordance with a pure affect that topples the universe into the void and leaves the painter above all with nothing to do.[22]

The colored or, rather, coloring void, is already force. Most of the great monochromes of modern painting no longer need to resort to little mural bouquets but present subtle imperceptible variations (which are constitutive of a percept nevertheless), either because they are cut off or edged on one side by a band, ribbon, or section of a different color or tone that, through proximity or distance, changes the intensity of the area of plain, uniform color or because they present almost virtual linear or circular figures, in matching tones, or because they are holed or slit: these are problems of junction, once again, but considerably expanded. In short, the area of plain, uniform color vibrates, clenches or cracks open because it is the bearer of glimpsed forces. And this, first of all, is what makes painting abstract: summoning forces, populating the area of plain, uniform color with the forces it bears, making the invisible forces visible in themselves, drawing up figures with a geometrical appearance but that are no more than forces – the forces of gravity, heaviness, rotation, the vortex, explosion, expansion, germination, and time (as music may be said to make the sonorous force of time audible, in Messiaen for example, or literature, with Proust, to make the illegible force of time legible and conceivable). Is this not the definition of the percept itself – to make perceptible the imperceptible forces that populate the world, affect us, and make us become? Mondrian achieves this by simple differences between the sides of a square, Kandinsky by linear 'tensions,' and Kupka by planes curved around the point. From the depths of time there comes to us what Worringer called the abstract and infinite northern line, the line of the universe that forms ribbons, strips, wheels, and turbines, an entire 'vitalized geometry,' *rising to the intuition of mechanical forces*, constituting a powerful nonorganic life.[23] Painting's eternal object is this: to paint forces, like Tintoretto.

Perhaps also we rediscover the house and the body? – because the infinite area of plain, uniform color is often that onto which the window or door opens; or it is the wall of the house itself, or the floor. Van Gogh and Gauguin sprinkle the area of plain, uniform color with little bunches of flowers so as to turn it into wallpaper on which the face stands out in broken tones. In fact, the house does not shelter us from cosmic forces; at most it filters and selects them. Sometimes it turns them into benevolent forces: Archimedes' force, the force of the water's pressure on a graceful body floating in the bath of the house, has never been made visible in painting in the way that Bonnard succeeded in doing in *Le Nu au bain*. But equally, the most baleful forces can come in through the half-open or closed door: cosmic forces themselves are what produce zones of indiscernibility in the broken tones of a face, slapping, scratching, and melting it in every way, and these zones of indiscernibility reveal the forces lurking in the area of plain, uniform color (Bacon). The clinch of forces as percepts and becomings as affects are completely complementary. According to Worringer, the abstract line of force is rich in animal motifs. Animal, plant, and molecular becomings correspond to cosmic or cosmogenetic forces: to the point that the body disappears into the plain color or becomes part of the wall or, conversely, the plain color buckles and whirls around in the body's zone of indiscernibility. In short, the being of sensation is not the flesh but the compound of nonhuman forces of the cosmos, of man's nonhuman becomings, and of the ambiguous house that exchanges and adjusts them, makes them whirl around like winds. Flesh is only the developer which disappears in what it develops: the compound of sensation. Like all painting, abstract painting is sensation, nothing but sensation. In Mondrian the room accedes to the being of sensation by dividing the infinite empty plane by colored sections that, in turn, give it an infinite openness.[24] In Kandinsky, houses are sources of abstraction that consist less in geometrical figures than in dynamic trajectories and errant lines, 'paths that go for a walk' in the surroundings. In Kupka it is first of all on the body that the painter cuts out colored ribbons or sections that will give, in the void, the curved planes

that populate it by becoming cosmogenetic sensations. Is sensation spiritual, or already a living concept – the room, house, universe? Abstract art, and then conceptual art, directly pose the question that haunts all painting – that of its relation to the concept and the function.

Perhaps art begins with the animal, at least with the animal that carves out a territory and constructs a house (both are correlative, or even one and the same, in what is called a habitat). The territory–house system transforms a number of organic functions – sexuality, procreation, aggression, feeding. But this transformation does not explain the appearance of the territory and the house; rather it is the other way around: the territory implies the emergence of pure sensory qualities, of sensibilia that cease to be merely functional and become expressive features, making possible a transformation of functions.[25] No doubt this expressiveness is already diffused in life, and the simple field of lilies might be said to celebrate the glory of the skies. But with the territory and the house it becomes constructive and erects ritual monuments of an animal mass that celebrates qualities before extracting new causalities and finalities from them. This emergence of pure sensory qualities is already art, not only in the treatment of external materials but in the body's postures and colors, in the songs and cries that mark out the territory. It is an outpouring of features, colors, and sounds that are inseparable insofar as they become expressive (philosophical concept of territory). Every morning the *Scenopoetes dentirostris*, a bird of the Australian rain forests, cuts leaves, makes them fall to the ground, and turns them over so that the paler, internal side contrasts with the earth. In this way it constructs a stage for itself like a ready-made; and directly above, on a creeper or a branch, while fluffing out the feathers beneath its beak to reveal their yellow roots, it sings a complex song made up from its own notes and, at intervals, those of other birds that it imitates: it is a complete artist.[26] This is not synesthesia in the flesh but blocs of sensations in the territory – colors, postures, and sounds that sketch out a total work of art. These sonorous blocs are refrains; but there are also refrains of posture and color, and postures and colors are always being introduced into refrains: bowing low, straightening up, dancing in a circle and lines of colors. The whole of the refrain is the being of sensation. Monuments are refrains. In this respect art is continually haunted by the animal. Kafka's art is the most profound meditation on the territory and the house, the burrow, portrait-postures (the inhabitant's lowered head with chin sunk into their chest or, on the contrary, 'Shamefaced Lacky' whose angular head goes right through the ceiling); sounds-music (dogs who are musicians in their very postures; Josephine, the singing mouse, of whom it will never be known whether she sings; Gregor whose squeaking combines with his sister's violin in a complex bedroom–house–territory relationship). All that is needed to produce art is here: a house, some postures, colors, and songs – on condition that it all opens onto and launches itself on a mad vector as on a witch's broom, a line of the universe or of deterritorialization – *Perspective on a Room with Occupants* (Klee).

Every territory, every habitat, joins up not only its spatiotemporal but its qualitative planes or sections: a posture and a song for example, a song and a color, percepts and affects. And every territory encompasses or cuts across the territories of other species, or intercepts the trajectories of animals without territories, forming interspecies junction points. It is in this sense that, to start with, Uexküll develops a melodic, polyphonic, and contrapuntal conception of Nature. Not only does birdsong have its own relationships of counterpoint but it can find these relationships in the song of other species, and it may even imitate these other songs as if it were a question of occupying a maximum of frequencies. The spider's web contains 'a very subtle portrait of the fly,' which serves as its counterpoint. On the death of the mollusk, the shell that serves as its house becomes the counterpoint of the hermit crab that turns it into its own habitat, thanks to its tail, which is not for swimming but is prehensile, enabling it to capture the empty shell. The tick is organically constructed in such a way that it finds its counterpoint

in any mammal whatever that passes below its branch, as oak leaves arranged in the form of tiles find their counterpoint in the raindrops that stream over them. This is not a teleological conception but a melodic one in which we no longer know what is art and what nature ('natural technique'). There is counterpoint whenever a melody arises as a 'motif' within another melody, as in the marriage of bumblebee and snapdragon. These relationships of counterpoint join planes together, form compounds of sensations and blocs, and determine becomings. But it is not just these determinate *melodic compounds*, however generalized, that constitute nature; another aspect, an infinite *symphonic plane of composition*, is also required: from House to universe. From endosensation to exosensation. This is because the territory does not merely isolate and join but opens onto cosmic forces that arise from within or come from outside, and renders their effect on the inhabitant perceptible. The oak's plane of composition is what supports or includes the force of the acorn's development and the force of formation of raindrops, and the tick's plane of composition is what supports the force of light, which can attract the insect to the end of a branch to a sufficient height, and the force of weight with which it lets itself fall onto the passing mammal – and between them nothing, an alarming void that can last for years if no mammals pass by.[27] Sometimes forces blend into one another in subtle transitions, decompose hardly glimpsed; and sometimes they alternate or conflict with one another. Sometimes they allow themselves to be selected by the territory, and the most benevolent ones are those that enter the house. Sometimes they send out a mysterious call that draws the inhabitant from the territory and launches it on an irresistible voyage, like chaffinches that suddenly assemble in their millions or crayfish that set off in step on an immense pilgrimage to the bottom of the water. Sometimes they swoop down on the territory, turn it upside down, wickedly, restoring the chaos from which, with difficulty, the territory came. But if nature is like art, this is always because it combines these two living elements in every way: House and Universe, *Heimlich* and *Unheimlich*, territory and deterritorialization, finite melodic compounds and the great infinite plane of composition, the small and large refrain.

Art begins not with flesh but with the house. That is why architecture is the first of the arts. When Dubuffet tries to identify a certain condition of *art brut*, he turns first of all to the house, and all his work stands between architecture, sculpture, and painting. And, not going beyond form, the most scientific architecture endlessly produces and joins up planes and sections. That is why it can be defined by the 'frame,' by an interlocking of differently oriented frames, which will be imposed on the other arts, from painting to the cinema. The prehistory of the picture has been presented as passing through the fresco within the frame of the wall, stained glass within the frame of the window, and mosaic within the frame of the floor: 'The frame is the umbilicus that attaches the picture to the monument of which it is the reduction,' like the gothic frame, with small columns, diagonal ribs, and openwork spire.[28] By making architecture the first art of the frame, Bernard Cache is able to list a certain number of enframing forms that do not determine in advance any concrete content or function of the edifice: the wall that cuts off, the window that captures or selects (in direct contact with the territory), the ground-floor that wards off or rarefies ('rarefying the earth's relief so as to give a free path to human trajectories'), the roof that envelops the place's singularity ('the sloping roof puts the edifice on a hill'). Interlocking these frames or joining up all these planes – wall section, window section, floor section, slope section – is a composite system rich in points and counterpoints. The frames and their joins hold the compounds of sensations, hold up figures, and intermingle with their upholding, with their own appearance. These are the faces of a dice of sensation. Frames or sections are not coordinates; they belong to compounds of sensations whose faces, whose interfaces, they constitute. But however extendable this system may be, it still needs a vast plane of composition that carries out a kind of *deframing* following lines of flight that pass through the territory only in order to open it onto the

universe, that go from house–territory to town–cosmos, and that now dissolve the identity of the place through variation of the earth, a town having not so much a place as vectors folding the abstract line of relief. On this plane of composition, as on 'an abstract vectorial space,' geometrical figures are laid out – cone, prism, dihedron, simple plane – which are no more than cosmic forces capable of merging, being transformed, confronting each other, and alternating; world before man yet produced by man.[29] The planes must now be taken apart in order to relate them to their intervals rather than to one another and in order to create new affects.[30] We have seen that painting pursued the same movement. The frame or the picture's edge is, in the first place, the external envelope of a series of frames or sections that join up by carrying out counterpoints of lines and colors, by determining compounds of sensations. But the picture is also traversed by a deframing power that opens it onto a plane of composition or an infinite field of forces. These processes may be very diverse, even at the level of the external frame: irregular forms, sides that do not meet, Seurat's painted or stippled frames, and Mondrian's squares standing on a corner, all of which give the picture the power to leave the canvas. The painter's action never stays within the frame; it leaves the frame and does not begin with it.

Literature, and especially the novel, seems to be in the same situation. What matters is not, as in bad novels, the opinions held by characters in accordance with their social type and characteristics but rather the relations of counterpoint into which they enter and the compounds of sensations that these characters either themselves experience or make felt in their becomings and their visions. Counterpoint serves not to report real or fictional conversations but to bring out the madness of all conversation and of all dialogue, even interior dialogue. Everything that novelists must extract from the perceptions, affections, and opinions of their psychosocial 'models' passes entirely into the percepts and affects to which the character must be raised without holding on to any other life. And this entails a vast plane of composition that is not abstractly preconceived but constructed as the work progresses, opening, mixing, dismantling, and reassembling increasingly unlimited compounds in accordance with the penetration of cosmic forces. Bakhtin's theory of the novel goes in this direction by showing, from Rabelais to Dostoyevsky, the coexistence of contrapuntal, polyphonic, and plurivocal compounds with an architectonic or symphonic plane of composition.[31] A novelist like Dos Passos achieves an extraordinary art of counterpoint in the compounds he forms with characters, current events, biographies, and camera eyes, at the same time as a plane of composition is expanded to infinity so as to sweep everything up into Life, into Death, the town cosmos. If we return to Proust, it is because he more than anyone else made the two elements, although present in each other, almost follow one another; the plane of composition, for life and for death, emerges gradually from compounds of sensation that he draws up in the course of lost time, until appearing in itself with time regained, the force, or rather the forces, of pure time that have now become perceptible. Everything begins with Houses, each of which must join up its sections and hold up compounds – Combray, the Guermantes' house, the Verdurins' salon – and the houses are themselves joined together according to interfaces, but a planetary Cosmos is already there, visible through the telescope, which ruins or transforms them and absorbs them into an infinity of the patch of uniform color. Everything begins with refrains, each of which, like the little phrase of Vinteuil's sonata, is composed not only in itself but with other, variable sensations, like that of an unknown passer-by, like Odette's face, like the leaves of the Bois de Boulogne – and everything comes to an end at infinity in the great Refrain, the phrase of the septet in perpetual metamorphosis, the song of the universe, the world before or after man. From every finite thing, Proust makes a being of sensation that is constantly preserved, but by vanishing on a plane of composition of Being: 'beings of flight.'

EXAMPLE 13

The situation of music seems no different and perhaps embodies the frame even more powerfully. Yet it is said that sound has no frame. But compounds of sensation, sonorous blocs, equally possess sections or framing forms each of which must join together to secure a certain closing-off. The simplest cases are the melodic *air*, which is a monophonic refrain; the *motif*, which is already polyphonic, an element of a melody entering into the development of another and creating counterpoint; and the *theme*, as the object of harmonic modifications through melodic lines. These three elementary forms construct the sonorous house and its territory. They correspond to the three modalities of a being of sensation, for the air is a vibration, the motif is a clinch, a coupling, whereas the theme does not close without also unclenching, splitting, and opening. In fact, the most important musical phenomenon that appears as the sonorous compounds of sensation become more complex is that their closure or shutting-off (through the joining of their frames, of their sections) is accompanied by a possibility of opening onto an ever more limitless plane of composition. According to Bergson, musical beings are like living beings that compensate for their individuating closure by an openness created by modulation, repetition, transposition, juxtaposition. If we consider the sonata we find a particularly rigid enframing form based upon a bithematism, and in which the first movement presents the following sections: exposition of the first theme, transition, exposition of the second theme, developments on the first or second, coda, development of the first with modulation, and so on. It is an entire house with its rooms. But it is the first movement, rather, that forms a cell in this way, and great musicians rarely follow the canonical form; the other movements can open out, especially the second, through theme and variation, until Liszt ensures a fusion of movements in the 'symphonic poem.' The sonata appears then rather like a crossroads form where the opening of a plane of composition is born from the joining of musical sections, from the closure of sonorous compounds.

In this respect, the old procedure of theme and variation, which maintains the harmonic frame of the theme, gives way to a sort of deframing when the piano generates *compositional studies* (Chopin, Schumann, Liszt): this is a new essential moment, because creative labor no longer bears on sonorous compounds, motifs, and themes, even if this may involve extracting a plane from them, but on the contrary bears directly on the plane of composition itself, so that it gives birth to much freer and deframed compounds, to almost incomplete or overloaded aggregates, in permanent disequilibrium. Increasingly, it is the 'color' of the sound that matters. We pass from the House to the Cosmos (according to a formula taken up by Stockhausen's work). The work of the plane of composition develops in two directions that involve a disaggregation of the tonal frame: the immense uniform areas [*aplats*] of continuous variation that couple and combine the forces that have become sonorous in Wagner, or the broken tones [*tons rompus*] that separate and disperse the forces by harmonizing their reversible passages in Debussy – Wagner-universe, Debussy-universe. All the tunes, all the little framing or framed refrains – childish, domestic, professional, national, territorial – are swept up in the great Refrain, a powerful song of the earth – the deterritorialized – which arises with Mahler, Berg, or Bartók. And no doubt in each case the plane of composition generates new closures, as in serial music. But, each time, the musician's action consists in deframing, in finding the opening, taking up the plane of composition once more, in accordance with the formula that obsesses Boulez: to plot a transversal, irreducible to both the harmonic vertical and melodic horizontal, that involves sonorous blocs of variable individuation but that also opens them up or splits them in a space-time that determines their density and their course over the plane.[32] The great refrain arises as we distance ourselves from the house, even if this is in order to return, since no one will recognize us any more when we come back.

Composition, composition is the sole definition of art. Composition is aesthetic, and what is not composed is not a work of art. However, technical composition, the work of the material that often calls on science (mathematics, physics, chemistry, anatomy), is not to be confused with aesthetic composition, which is the work of sensation. Only the latter fully deserves the name *composition*, and a work of art is never produced by or for the sake of technique. To be sure, technique includes many things that are individualized according to each artist and work: words and syntax in literature; not only the canvas but its preparation in painting, pigments, their mixtures, and methods of perspective; or the twelve tones of Western music, instruments, scales, and pitch. And the relationship between the two planes, between technical and aesthetic planes of composition, constantly varies historically. Take two states of oil painting that can be opposed to each other: in the first case, the picture is prepared with a white chalk background on which the outline is drawn and washed in (sketch), and finally color, light, and shade are put down. In the other case, the background becomes increasingly thick, opaque, and absorbent, so that it takes on a tinge with the wash and the work becomes impasted on a brown range, 'reworkings' [*repentirs*[33]] taking the place of the sketch: the painter paints on color, then color alongside color, increasingly the colors become accents, the architecture being assured by 'the contrast of complementaries and the agreement of analogues' (Van Gogh); it is through and in color that the architecture will be found, even if the accents must be given up in order to reconstitute large coloring units. It is true that Xavier de Langlais sees throughout this second case a long decline, a decadence that collapses into the ephemeral and fails to restore an architecture: the picture darkens, becomes dull, or quickly flakes.[34] And doubtless this remark raises the question, at least negatively, of progress in art, since Langlais judges decadence as beginning after Van Eyck (somewhat like those who see music coming to an end with the Gregorian chant, or philosophy with Thomas Aquinas). But it is a technical remark that concerns only the material: not only is the duration of the material quite relative but sensation belongs to a different order and possesses an existence in itself for as long as the material lasts. The relationship of sensation with the material must therefore be assessed within the limits of the duration, whatever this may be. If there is progress in art it is because art can live only by creating new percepts and affects as so many detours, returns, dividing lines, changes of level and scale. From this point of view, the distinction between two states of oil painting assumes a completely different, aesthetic and no longer technical aspect – this distinction clearly does not come down to 'representational or not,' since no art and no sensation have ever been representational.

In the first case *sensation is realized in the material* and does not exist outside of this realization. It could be said that sensation (the compound of sensations) is projected onto the well-prepared technical plane of composition, in such a way that the aesthetic plane of composition covers it up. The material itself must therefore include mechanisms of perspective as a result of which the projected sensation is realized not solely by covering up the picture but according to a depth. Art thus enjoys a semblance of transcendence that is expressed not in a thing to be represented but in the paradigmatic character of projection and in the 'symbolic' character of perspective. According to Bergson the Figure is like fabulation: it has a religious origin. But, when it becomes aesthetic, its sensory transcendence enters into a hidden or open opposition to the suprasensory transcendence of religion.

In the second case it is no longer sensation that is realized in the material *but the material that passes into sensation*. Of course, sensation no more exists outside of this passage, and the technical plane of composition has no more autonomy, than in the first case: it is never valid for itself. But now it might be said that it *ascends* into the aesthetic plane of composition and, as Damisch says, gives it a specific thickness independent of any perspective or depth. It is at this moment that the figures of art free themselves from an apparent transcendence or paradigmatic model and avow their innocent atheism, their paganism. Of course, between these two cases, between these two states of sensation and these two poles of technique, transitions, combinations, and coexistences are constantly being produced

(the impasted work of Titian or Rubens, for example): the poles are more abstract than really distinct movements. Nonetheless, modern painting, even when it is satisfied with oil and medium,[35] turns increasingly toward the second pole and makes the material ascend and pass 'into the thickness' of the aesthetic plane of composition. That is why it is so wrong to define sensation in modern painting by the assumption of a pure visual flatness: the error is due perhaps to the fact that thickness does not need to be pronounced or deep. It could be said that Mondrian was a painter of thickness; and when Seurat defined painting as 'the art of ploughing a surface,' the only support he needs is the furrows and peaks of unglazed drawing paper. This is painting that no longer has any background because the 'underneath' comes through: the surface can be furrowed or the plane of composition can take on thickness insofar as the material rises up, independently of depth or perspective, independently of shadows and even of the chromatic order of color (the arbitrary colorist). One no longer covers over; one raises, accumulates, piles up, goes through, stirs up, folds. It is a promotion of the ground, and sculpture can become flat since the plane is stratified. One no longer paints 'on' but 'under.' These new powers of texture, that ascent of the ground with Dubuffet, have been pushed a long way by informal art, and by abstract expressionism and minimal art also, when they work with saturations, fibers, and layers, or when they use tarlatan or tulle in such a way that the painter can paint behind the picture in a state of blindness.[36] With Hantaï, foldings hide from the painter's sight what, once unfolded, they give up to the spectator's eye. In any case, and in all of these states, painting is thought: vision is through thought, and the eye thinks, even more than it listens.

Hubert Damisch turned the thickness of the plane into a genuine concept by showing that 'plaiting could well fulfil a role for future painting similar to that performed by perspective.' This is not peculiar to painting, since Damisch finds the same distinction at the level of the architectural plane when Scarpa, for example, suppresses the movement of projection and the mechanisms of perspective so as to inscribe volumes in the thickness of the plane itself.[37] From literature to music a material thickness is affirmed that does not allow itself to be reduced to any formal depth. It is characteristic of modern literature for words and syntax to rise up into the plane of composition and hollow it out rather than carry out the operation of putting it into perspective. It is also characteristic of modern music to relinquish projection and the perspectives that impose pitch, temperament, and chromatism, so as to give the sonorous plane a singular thickness to which very diverse elements bear witness: the development of studies for the piano, which cease being just technical and become 'compositional studies' (with the extension given to them by Debussy); the decisive importance assumed by the orchestra with Berlioz; the rise of timbre in Stravinsky and Boulez; the proliferation of percussive affects with metals, skins, and woods, and their combination with wind instruments to constitute blocs inseparable from the material (Varèse); the redefinition of the percept according to noise, to raw and complex sound (Cage); not only the enlargement of chromatism to other components of pitch but the tendency to a non-chromatic appearance of sound in an infinite continuum (electronic or electro-acoustic music).

There is only a single plane in the sense that art includes no other plane than that of aesthetic composition: in fact, the technical plane is necessarily covered up or absorbed by the aesthetic plane of composition. It is on this condition that matter becomes expressive: either the compound of sensations is realized in the material, or the material passes into the compound, but always in such a way as to be situated on a specifically aesthetic plane of composition. There are indeed technical problems in art, and science may contribute toward their solution, but they are posed only as a function of aesthetic problems of composition that concern compounds of sensation and the plane to which they and their materials are necessarily linked. Every sensation is a question, even if the only answer is silence. In art the problem is always that of finding what monument to erect on this plane, or what plane to slide under this monument, and both at the same time: hence, in Klee, the 'monument at the edge of the fertile country' and the 'monument in fertile

country.' Are there not as many different planes as universes, authors, or even works? In fact, universes, from one art to another as much as in one and the same art, may derive from one another, or enter into relations of capture and form constellations of universes, independently of any derivation, but also scattering themselves into nebulae or different stellar systems, in accordance with qualitative distances that are no longer those of space and time. Universes are linked together or separated on their lines of flight, so that the plane may be single at the same time as universes are irreducibly multiple.

Everything (including technique) takes place between compounds of sensation and the aesthetic plane of composition. Now the latter does not come before, being neither intentional nor preconceived and having nothing to do with a program, but neither does it come afterward, although the awareness of it is formed progressively and often suddenly appears afterward. The town does not come after the house, nor the cosmos after the territory. The universe does not come after the figure, and the figure is an aptitude of a universe. We have gone from the composite sensation to the plane of composition, but only so as to recognize their strict coexistence or complementarity, neither of them advancing except through the other. The composite sensation, made up of percepts and affects, deterritorializes the system of opinion that brought together dominant perceptions and affections within a natural, historical, and social milieu. But the composite sensation is reterritorialized on the plane of composition, because it erects its houses there, because it appears there within interlocked frames or joined sections that surround its components; landscapes that have become pure percepts, and characters that become pure affects. At the same time the plane of composition involves sensation in a higher deterritorialization, making it pass through a sort of deframing which opens it up and breaks it open onto an infinite cosmos. As in Pessoa, a sensation does not occupy a place on the plane without extending it, distending it over the entire earth, and freeing all the sensations it contains: opening out or splitting open, *equaling infinity*. Perhaps the peculiarity of art is to pass through the finite in order to rediscover, to restore the infinite.

What defines thought in its three great forms – art, science, and philosophy – is always confronting chaos, laying out a plane, throwing a plane over chaos. But philosophy wants to save the infinite by giving it consistency: it lays out a plane of immanence that, through the action of conceptual personae, takes events or consistent concepts to infinity. Science, on the other hand, relinquishes the infinite in order to gain reference: it lays out a plane of simply undefined coordinates that each time, through the action of partial observers, defines states of affairs, functions, or referential propositions. Art wants to create the finite that restores the infinite: it lays out a plane of composition that, in turn, through the action of aesthetic figures, bears monuments or composite sensations. Damisch has analyzed accurately Klee's picture *Equals Infinity*. It is certainly not an allegory but the act of painting that appears as a painting. It seems to us that the brown blobs dancing in the margin and crossing the canvas are the infinite passage of chaos; the sowing of points on the canvas, divided by rods, is the finite composite sensation, but opening onto the plane of composition that restores the infinite to us, $= \infty$. However, art should not be thought to be like a synthesis of science and philosophy, of the finite and infinite routes. The three routes are specific, each as direct as the others, and they are distinguished by the nature of the plane and by what occupies it. Thinking is thought through concepts, or functions, or sensations and no one of these thoughts is better than another, or more fully, completely, or synthetically 'thought.' The frames of art are no more scientific coordinates than sensations are concepts, or vice versa. Abstract art and conceptual art are two recent attempts to bring art and philosophy together, but they do not substitute the concept for the sensation; rather they create sensations and not concepts. Abstract art seeks only to refine sensation, to dematerialize it by setting out an architectonic plane of composition in which it would become a purely spiritual being, a radiant thinking and thought matter, no longer a sensation of sea or tree, but a sensation of the concept of

sea or concept of tree. Conceptual art seeks an opposite dematerialization through generalization, by installing a sufficiently neutralized plane of composition (the catalog that brings together works not displayed, the ground covered by its own map, disused spaces without architecture and the 'flatbed'[38] plane) so that everything takes on a value of sensation reproducible to infinity: things, images or clichés, propositions – a thing, its photograph on the same scale and in the same place, its dictionary definition. However, in the latter case it is not at all clear that this way leads either to the sensation or to the concept, because the plan of composition tends to become 'informative,' and the sensation depends upon the simple 'opinion' of a spectator who determines whether or not to 'materialize' the sensation, that is to say, decides whether or not it is art. This is a lot of effort to find ordinary perceptions and affections in the infinite and to reduce the concept to a *doxa* of the social body or great American metropolis.

The three thoughts intersect and intertwine but without synthesis or identification. With its concepts, philosophy brings forth events. Art erects monuments with its sensations. Science constructs states of affairs with its functions. A rich tissue of correspondences can be established between the planes. But the network has its culminating points, where sensation itself becomes sensation of concept or function, where the concept becomes concept of function or of sensation, and where the function becomes function of sensation or concept. And none of these elements can appear without the other being still to come, still indeterminate or unknown. Each created element on a plane calls on other heterogeneous elements, which are still to be created on other planes: thought as heterogenesis. It is true that these culminating points contain two extreme dangers: either leading us back to the opinion from which we wanted to escape or precipitating us into the chaos that we wanted to confront.

Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill

Notes

1 Edith Wharton, *Les metteurs en scène*, Paris, 10–18, 1986, p. 263. It concerns an academic and worldly painter who gives up painting after seeing a little picture by one [of] his unrecognized contemporaries: 'And me, I have not created any of my works, I have simply adopted them.'

2 Joachim Gasquet, *Cézanne: A Memoir with Conversations*, trans. Christopher Pemberton, London: Thames and Hudson, 1991, p. 164.

3 See François Cheng, *Vide et plein*, Paris, Seuil, 1979, p. 63 (citation of the painter Huang Pin-Hung).

4 Antonin Artaud, 'Van Gogh: The Man Suicided by Society,' in *Artaud Anthology*, ed. Jack Hirschman, San Francisco, City Lights Books, 1965, pp. 156, 160 (translation modified):

> As a painter, and nothing else but a painter, Van Gogh adopted the methods of pure painting and never went beyond them … The marvelous thing is that this painter who was only a painter … among all the existing painters, is [also] the one who makes us forget that we are dealing with painting.
>
> (pp. 154–56)

5 José Gil devotes a chapter to the procedure by which Pessoa extracts the percept on the basis of lived perceptions, particularly in 'L'ode maritime.' *Fernando Pessoa ou la métaphysique des sensations*, Paris, La Différence, 1988, chap. 2.

6 Gasquet, *Cézanne*, p. 154. See Erwin Straus, *Du sens des sens*, Paris: Millon, n.d., p. 519:

> The great landscapes have a wholly visionary characteristic. Vision is what of the invisible becomes visible … The landscape is invisible because the more we conquer it, the more we lose ourselves in it. To reach the landscape we must sacrifice as much as we can all temporal, spatial, objective determination; but this abandon does not only attain the objective, it affects us ourselves to the same

extent. In the landscape we cease to be historical beings, that is to say, beings who can themselves be objectified. We do not have any memory for the landscape, we no longer have any memory for ourselves in the landscape. We dream in daylight with open eyes. We are hidden to the objective world, but also to ourselves. This is feeling.

7 Roberto Rossellini, *Le cinéma révélé*, Paris: Etoile-Cahiers du cinéma, 1984, pp. 80–82.

8 In the second chapter of *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. T. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton with the assistance of W. Horsfall Carter (New York: Henry Holt, 1935), Bergson analyzes fabulation as a visionary faculty very different from the imagination and that consists in creating gods and giants, 'semi-personal powers or effective presences.' It is exercised first of all in religions, but it is freely developed in art and literature.

9 Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell, London: Hogarth Press, 1980, vol. 3, pp. 209, 210.

10 Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards, New York: Grove Press, 1958, p. 134.

11 Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio, *HAI*, Paris: Flammarion, 1991, p. 7 ('I am an Indian' – although I do not know how to cultivate corn or make a dugout). In a famous text, Michaux spoke of the 'health' peculiar to art: postface to 'Mes propriétés' – in Henri Michaux, *La nuit remue*, Paris: Gallimard, 1935, p. 193.

12 André Dhôtel, *Terres de mémoire*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979, pp. 225–26.

13 Emile Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1946, pp. 59–60.

14 These three questions frequently recur in Proust, especially in 'Time Regained' in *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin; and by Andreas Mayor, London: Chatto and Windus, 1982, vol. 3, pp. 931–32 (on life, vision, and art as the creation of universes).

15 Malcolm Lowry, *Under the Volcano*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963, p. 183.

16 Osip Mandelstam, *The Noise of Time: The Prose of Osip Mandelstam*, trans. with critical essays by Clarence Brown, San Francisco: North Point Press, 1986, pp. 109–10.

17 Mikel Dufrenne, in *Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953), produced a kind of analytic of perceptual and affective a priori, which founded sensation as a relationship of the body and the world. He stayed close to Erwin Straus. But is there a being of sensation that manifests itself in the flesh? Maurice Merleau-Ponty followed this path in *The Visible and the Invisible* (trans. A. Lingis, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1969). Dufrenne emphasized a number of reservations concerning such an ontology of the flesh (see *L'œil et l'oreille*, Montreal, Hexagone, 1987). Recently, Didier Franck has again taken up Merleau-Ponty's theme by showing the decisive importance of the flesh in Heidegger and already in Husserl (see *Heidegger et le problème de l'espace*, Paris: Minuit, 1986, and *Chair et corps*, Paris: Minuit, 1981). This whole problem is at the center of a phenomenology of art. Perhaps Michel Foucault's still-unpublished book *Les aveux de la chair* will teach us about the most general origins of the notion of the flesh and its significance in the Church Fathers.

18 There does not seem to be a standard equivalent technical term in English for the French *tons rompus*, which means colors or tones made up of several different colors or tones. Van Gogh's letters, which are a principal reference point for this notion, speak of colors that are 'broken' with other colors; following this we have translated the term as 'broken tones.'

19 As Georges Didi-Huberman demonstrates, the flesh gives rise to a 'doubt': it is too close to chaos. Hence the necessity of a complementarity between the 'pink' [*incarnat*] and the 'section' [*pan*], the essential theme of *La peinture incarnée* (Paris: Minuit, 1985), which is taken up again and developed in *Devant l'image* (Paris: Minuit, 1990).

20 As with *tons rompus*, the term with which it is contrasted here, there does not seem to be a standard English equivalent for the French *aplat*. The noun has connotations of flatness, following the verb *aplatir* (to flatten or smooth out), but in painting it signifies areas of plain, uniform color. In the absence of a single English word we have decided to use the entire phrase 'area of plain, uniform color.'

21 Vincent Van Gogh, letter no. 520 to Theo, 11 August 1888, in *The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, 1958, vol. 3. Broken tones and their relationship with the area of plain, uniform color are a frequent theme of the correspondence. Similarly for Gauguin; see letter to Schuffenecker, 8 October 1888, in *Lettres*, Paris: Grasset, 1946, p. 140:

> I have done a self-portrait for Vincent … I think it is one of my best: absolutely incomprehensible (for example) it is so abstract … its drawing is completely special, complete abstraction … The color is a color far from nature; imagine a vague memory of pottery buckled by great heat. All the reds, the violets, scored by the fire's blaze like a furnace glowing to the eyes, seat of the struggles of the painter's thought. All on a chrome ground sprinkled with childish bunches of flowers. Room of pure young girl.

This is the idea of the 'arbitrary colorist' according to Van Gogh.

22 Cf. *Artstudio* (n.d.), no. 16, 'Monochromes' (Geneviève Monnier and Denys Riout on Klein, and Pierre Sterckx on the 'current avatars of monochrome').

23 Wilhelm Worringer, *Form in Gothic*, London: Putnam's and Sons, 1927.

24 Piet Mondrian, 'Réalité naturelle et réalité abstraite,' in Michel Seuphor, *Piet Mondrian, sa vie, sa œuvre*, Paris, Flammarion, n.d., on the room and its unfolding. Michel Butor has analyzed this unfolding of the room into squares or rectangles, and the opening onto an interior square, empty and white like the 'promise of a future room.' Michel Butor, 'Le carré et son habitant,' *Répertoire III*, Paris: Minuit, 1992, pp. 307–09, 314–15.

25 It seems to us that Lorenz's mistake is wanting to explain the territory by an evolution of functions: Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression*, trans. Marjorie Kerr Wilson, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966.

26 Alan John Marshall, *Bower Birds*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954; and E.T. Gilliard, *Birds of Paradise and Bower Birds*, London, Weidenfeld, 1969.

27 See Jakob von Uexküll's masterpiece, *Mondes animaux et monde humain, Théorie de la signification*, Paris: Gonthier, 1965, pp. 137–42: 'counterpoint, motif of development, and morphogenesis.'

28 Henry van de Velde, *Déblaiement d'art*, Brussels: Archives architecture moderne, 1979, p. 20.

29 On all these points, the analysis of enframing forms, and of the town–cosmos (the example of Lausanne), see Bernard Cache's forthcoming *L'ameublement du territoire*.

30 Pascal Bonitzer formed the concept of deframing [*décadrage*] in order to highlight new relationships between the planes in cinema (*Cahiers du cinéma* 284, January 1978): 'disjointed, crushed or fragmented' planes, thanks to which cinema becomes an art by getting free from the commonest emotions, which were in danger of preventing its aesthetic development, and by producing new affects. See Pascal Bonitzer, *Le champ aveugle: essais sur le cinéma*, Paris: Gallimard – Cahiers du cinéma, 1982: 'system of the emotions.'

31 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Esthétique et théorie du roman*, trans. Daria Olivier, Paris: Gallimard, 1978.

32 Pierre Boulez, especially *Orientations*, trans. Martin Cooper, London: Faber, 1986, and *Boulez on Music Today*, trans. S. Bradshaw and Richard Rodney Bennett, London: Faber, 1971. The extension of the series into durations, intensities, and timbres is not an act of closure but, on the contrary, an opening of what is closed in the series of pitches [*hauteurs*].

33 We have translated *repentirs* as 'reworkings,' but the French also conveys the sense of 'corrections and revisions made while the painting is being executed,' that is to say, not a reworking of a completed painting.

34 Xavier de Langlais, *La technique de la peinture à l'huile*, Paris: Flammarion, 1988; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Theory of Colors*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1970, pp. 902–09.

35 *Médium* is the same in English – 'medium' – and signifies the liquid used to bind powdered color to produce paint, e.g., oil, size, egg yolk, gum arabic.

36 See Christian Bonnefoi, 'Interview et comment par Yves-Alain Bois,' *Macula* (n.d.), pp. 5–6.

37 Hubert Damisch, *Le fenêtre jaune cadmium; ou Les dessous de la peinture*, Paris: Seuil, 1984, pp. 275–305 (and p. 80, on the thickness of the plane in Pollock). Damisch has insisted more than other writers on art-as-thought and painting-as-thought, such as Dubuffet in particular sought to institute. Mallarmé made

the book's 'thickness' a dimension distinct from its depth; see Jacques Schérer, *Le livre de Mallarmé*, Paris, Gallimard, 1978, p. 55. Boulez takes up this theme on his own account for music (*Orientations*).

38 In English in the original.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Gilles Deleuze in English

Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature (1953), trans. C.V. Boundas, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

Nietzsche and Philosophy (1962), trans. H. Tomlinson, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties (1963), trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Proust and Signs (1964), trans. R. Howard, New York: G. Braziller, 1972.

Bergsonism (1966), trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, New York: Zone Books, 1988.

Masochism: An Interpretation of Coldness and Cruelty (1967), trans. J. McNeil, New York: G. Braziller, 1971.

Difference and Repetition (1968), trans. P. Patton, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza (1968), trans. M. Joughin, New York: Zone Books, 1990.

The Logic of Sense (1969), ed. C.V. Boundas, trans. M. Lester, with C. Stivale, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia I (with F. Guattari; 1972), trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H.R. Laine, New York: Viking Press, 1977.

Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature (with F. Guattari; 1975), trans. D. Polan, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

Dialogues (with C. Parnet; 1977), trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.

A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia II (with F. Guattari; 1980), trans. B. Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Spinoza: Practical Philosophy (1981), trans. R. Hurley, San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988.

Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation (1981), London: Continuum, 2003.

On the Line (with F. Guattari), ed. S. Lotringer, New York: Semiotext(e), 1983.

Cinema 1: The Movement-Image (1983), trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

Cinema 2: The Time-Image (1985), trans. H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Foucault (1986), trans. S. Hand, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.

The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque (1988), trans. T. Conley, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

Negotiations (1990), trans. M. Joughin, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

What is Philosophy? (with F. Guattari; 1991), trans. G. Burchill, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Essays Critical and Clinical (1993), trans. D. Smith and M. Greco, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life (1995), trans. A. Boyman, New York: Zone Books, 2005.

Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974 (2002), trans. M. Taormina, New York: Semiotext(e), 2003.

Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995 (2003), ed. D. Lapoujade, New York: Semiotext(e), 2006.

The Deleuze Reader, ed. C. Boundas, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

Further reading

For introductions to Deleuze, see Bonta and Protevi (2004), Buchanan (2000), Colebrook (2001), Due (2007), Holland (1999), Khalfa (2003), Massumi (1992), May (2005), Smith and Protevi (2008), and Stivale (2005, 2008). Kaufman and Heller (1998), Khalfa (2003), and Patton (1996) offer collections of essays covering a range of critical perspectives. Deleuze's impact on philosophy and his relationship with other philosophers is addressed

by Boundas (2006), Boundas and Olkowski (1994), Hardt (1993), Lambert (2002), Lecercle (1985), Mullarkey (2006), Patton and Protevi (2003), and Toscano (2006), with Buchanan and Colebrook (2000), and Lorraine (1999) discussing feminist appropriations of his work. Alliez (2004), Bogue (1989), Goodchild (1997), and Stivale (1998) examine his collaborations with Guattari. Deleuze's relationship with psychoanalysis is explored by Brusseau (1998) and Kerslake (2007).

Deleuze's ontology is explored by Badiou (2000), de Beistegui (2010), Braidotti (2002), Duffy (2006b), Hallward (2006), Marks (1998) and Smith (2003), with Ansell Pearson (1997, 1999), Bell (2006), Duffy (2006a), Widder (2002), and Williams (2004) focusing on the significance of difference for his philosophy. The concept of immanence is considered in depth by Beistegui (2004), Bryant (2008), and Kerslake (2009), and the transversal, nomadic nature of his thought is addressed by Rajchman (2000) and Williams (2005).

Studies of Deleuze's work on art, literature, and representation are given by Bogue (2003b, 2003c), Grosz (2008), Holland *et al*. (2009), Lecercle (2002, 2010), Massumi (2002), O'Sullivan (2006), Olkowski (1999), Zepke (2005, 2006), and Zepke and O'Sullivan (2010), with Bogue (2003a), Flaxman (2000), and Rodowick (1997, 2009) focusing on cinema. Buchanan and Thoburn (2008), and Žižek (2003) examine the political implications of Deleuze's philosophy, while O'Sullivan and Zepke (2008), and Porter (2009) address the relation between aesthetics and politics. The Deleuzian concept of ecology is considered by Herzogenrath (2008).

See the next chapter in this *Reader* for major works by and further reading on Félix Guattari.

E. Alliez, *The Signature of the World: What is Deleuze and Guattari's Philosophy?*, trans. E.R. Albert and A. Toscano, London: Continuum, 2004.
K. Ansell Pearson (ed.), *Deleuze and Philosophy: The Difference Engineer*, London: Routledge, 1997.
———, *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze*, London: Routledge, 1999.
A. Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. L. Burchill, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2000.
M. de Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004.
———, *Immanence: Deleuze and Philosophy*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.
J. Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Difference*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.
R. Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, New York: Routledge, 1989.
———, *Deleuze on Cinema*, New York: Routledge, 2003a.
———, *Deleuze on Literature*, New York: Routledge, 2003b.
———, *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*, New York: Routledge, 2003c.
M. Bonta and J. Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004.
C. Boundas (ed.), *Deleuze and Philosophy*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.
C. Boundas and D. Olkowski (eds), *Gilles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy*, New York: Routledge, 1994.
R. Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*, Cambridge: Polity, 2002.
J. Brusseau, *Isolated Experiences: Gilles Deleuze and the Solitudes of Reversed Platonism*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.
L. Bryant, *Difference and Givenness: Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology of Immanence*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008.
I. Buchanan, *Deleuzism: A Metacommentary*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
I. Buchanan and C. Colebrook (eds), *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.
I. Buchanan and N. Thoburn (eds), *Deleuze and Politics*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
C. Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze*, New York: Routledge, 2001.
R. Due, *Deleuze*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.
S. Duffy (ed.), *Intensive Mathematics: The Logic of Difference*, Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2006a.
———, *The Logic of Expression: Quality, Quantity and Intensity in Spinoza, Hegel and Deleuze*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006b.
G. Flaxman, *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
P. Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997.
E. Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
P. Hallward, *Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation*, London: Verso, 2006.

M. Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
B. Herzogenrath (ed.), *Deleuze/Guattari and Ecology*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
E. Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis*, New York: Routledge, 1999.
E.W. Holland, D.W. Smith, and C.J. Stivale (eds), *Gilles Deleuze: Image and Text*, London: Continuum, 2009.
E. Kaufman and J. Heller (eds), *Deleuze & Guattari: New Mappings in Philosophy, Politics and Culture*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
C. Kerslake, *Deleuze and the Unconscious*, London: Continuum, 2007.
———, *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy: From Kant to Deleuze*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.
J. Khalfa (ed.), *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, London: Continuum, 2003.
G. Lambert, *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, London: Continuum, 2002.
J.-J. Lecercle, *Philosophy Through the Looking Glass*, Chicago: Open Court, 1985.
———, *Deleuze and Language*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
———, *Badiou and Deleuze Read Literature*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.
T. Lorraine, *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
J. Marks, *Gilles Deleuze: Vitalism and Multiplicity*, London: Pluto Press, 1998.
B. Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992.
——— (ed.), *A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari*, London: Routledge, 2002.
T. May, *Gilles Deleuze: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
J. Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy: An Outline*, London: Continuum, 2006.
S. O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
S. O'Sullivan and S. Zepke (eds), *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New*, London: Continuum, 2008.
D. Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
P. Patton (ed.), *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
P. Patton and J. Protevi (eds), *Between Deleuze and Derrida*, London: Continuum, 2003.
R. Porter, *Deleuze and Guattari: Aesthetics and Politics*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009.
J. Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000.
D. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.
——— (ed.), *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze's Film Philosophy*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
D. Smith and J. Protevi, 'Gilles Deleuze', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta, 2008. Online. Available HTTP: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/deleuze/ (accessed 22 July 2010).
D.W. Smith, 'Mathematics and the theory of multiplicities: Badiou and Deleuze revisited', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 2003, vol. 41, pp. 411–49.
C.J. Stivale, *The Twofold Thought of Deleuze and Guattari: Intersections and Animations*, New York: Guilford, 1998.
———, *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, London: Continuum, 2005.
———, *Gilles Deleuze's ABCs: The Folds of Friendship*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.
A. Toscano, *Theatre of Production: Philosophy and Individuation Between Kant and Deleuze*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
N. Widder, *Genealogies of Difference*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002.
J. Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004.
———, *The Transversal Thought of Gilles Deleuze: Encounters and Influences*, Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2005.
S. Zepke, *Art as Abstract Machine: Ontology and Aesthetics in Deleuze and Guattari*, London: Routledge, 2005.
———, 'The concept of art when art is not a concept: Deleuze and Guattari against conceptual art', *Angelaki*, 2006, vol. 11, pp. 157–66.
S. Zepke and S. O'Sullivan (eds), *Deleuze and Contemporary Art*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.
S. Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences*, New York: Routledge, 2003.

Chapter 36

FÉLIX GUATTARI

INTRODUCTION

Psychoanalyst, philosopher, political activist, and ecologist Félix Guattari (1930–92) is arguably best known for his collaborative works with Gilles Deleuze, e.g. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia 1* (1972), *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia 2* (1980), and *What is Philosophy?* (1991). He was one of Lacan's earliest trainees, and from the mid-1950s worked at La Borde, an experimental psychiatric clinic established by the Lacanian psychoanalyst Jean Oury. Despite these links with Lacan, the therapy practised at La Borde departed significantly from Lacanian approaches to psychoanalysis. While Lacan maintained 'the contractual Oedipal relationship between the analyst and the transference-bound analysand', Massumi writes, the ambition of La Borde was 'to abolish the hierarchy between doctor and patient in favour of an interactive group dynamic' that would find expression as revolutionary political practice.[1] For Guattari, the danger of the Freudian unconscious (a concept with which Lacan continued to work) was that it had 'lost the seething richness and disquieting atheism of its origins and, in its structuralist version, [had] been recentred on the analysis of the self, its adaptation to society, and its conformity with a signifying order'.[2]

The question of subjectivity and what forms it might take within society other than the capitalistic model of the isolated, essential subject are recurring themes within Guattari's writing; see, for example, *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle* (1972) and *Les années d'hiver, 1980–1985* (1986). The chapter representing him here, 'The New Aesthetic Paradigm', is from one of his final works on subjectivity: *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, published in France in 1992, the year of his death. As he explains in the book's opening chapter, subject and subjectivity are not the same:

> We are proposing to decentre the question of the subject onto the question of subjectivity. Traditionally, the subject was conceived as the ultimate essence of individuation, as a pure, empty, prereflexive apprehension of the world, a nucleus of sensibility, of expressivity – the unifier of states of consciousness. With subjectivity we place the emphasis instead on the founding instance of intentionality. This involves taking the relation between subject and object by the middle and foregrounding the expressive instance.[3]

Intentionality is the object-directedness of experience; experience is always experience *of something*. Guattari is focusing on the 'middle' of intentionality, on the relations prior to subject and object out of which an alternative form – subjectivity – might arise. A key concept for the early part of the chapter is the 'territorialized Assemblage of enunciation'. The direction of these territorialized Assemblages, their 'general evolution', is 'an accentuation of the individuation

of subjectivity, towards a loss of polyvocality'. Guattari's intention is to promote subjectivity as a source of polyvocality in the interests of ecology, where ecology is understood as a pathic, collective, sensitized attentiveness to the world, in contrast to the apathy and externalization engendered by liberalism and market forces. Polyvocality allows the formation of 'new collective assemblages of enunciation' out of which can arise 'risky initiatives, trial and error experiments'.[4] These 'different ways of seeing and of making the world, different ways of being and of bringing to light modalities of being', he writes, 'will open up, be irrigated and enrich one another'.[5]

With the term 'enunciation', Guattari identifies expression with the capacity to create new patterns of meaning and categorization. This is language conceived not as the expression of pre-determined mental content but as a complex of thought and substance which impacts upon the social and material orders within the world. Enunciation goes beyond the structuralist notion of a sign which indicates a signified content in virtue of its structural relation with other signs, and builds upon Hjelmslev's assertion that expression and content mutually presuppose one another. While the substance of expression (a material sign) and the substance of content (a concept) are wholly distinct and maintain no relation of correspondence, there is nevertheless an isomorphism between the two. 'It should be possible,' as Genosko makes the point, quoting Hjelmslev, 'to devise a grammatical method for the study of linguistic expression by "start[ing] from the content and proceed[ing] from the content to the expression".'[6] There is, Guattari writes, 'a bridge, a transversality' between the 'syntagmatic discursivity of Expression proper to language' and 'the division of semantic unities of Content (for example, the way classification of colours or animal categories is established)'.[7]

Guattari's name for this isomorphism or transversality is 'a deterritorialized machine'.[8] While he admits that the notion of an expression–content isomorphism is not new, he intends his 'machinic conception' to extend into contexts beyond language as it is narrowly construed by structuralism, such as (to use his own examples) 'biological codings or organizational forms belonging to the socius'.[9] The 'machinic' has a distributing effect. Our lives are machinic in the sense that our subjectivities and what is possible for us are enabled and extended by technology, from digital media and air travel to organ transplants and trans-national food distribution. This is not the subject as a mental insider with a clearly defined boundary but a subjectivity whose manifold edges have been milled by the technologies in which it is set, where the edges are milled sharp. For Guattari's subjectivity has teeth: these are edges which create subjectivity through the incisions they make in the world. This is a concept of subjectivity as something *continuously* sculpted and stretched by the mechanisms of distribution, where 'continuously' is emphasized to acknowledge that this is an ongoing machinic process of which enunciation, including art (as we shall see), is a part. The machinic is 'deterritorialized' or 'deterritorializing' in that it chews up established and stable modes of signifying, ways of thinking, and forms of behaviour to develop 'fields of the possible, tensions in value, relations of heterogeneity, of alterity, of becoming other'.[10]

In 'The New Aesthetic Paradigm', Guattari seeks to establish the place of art within his ontology. He focuses on the Assemblage, the unit which confers his commitment to an ontology where identities can flex, warp, and be reassembled through the force of deterritorialized enunciation. There are three ways in which Assemblages can take shape: (1) the 'spatial' or 'rhizomatic' mode in which one object simply invades another, leaving territorial limits in place; (2) the 'polar' mode which combines binary opposites, but which Guattari finds inherently capitalistic since the measure of equivalence implicit in the pairing of opposites, he argues, is tantamount to the economic valorization of capital; and (3) the 'mutant' or 'autopoietic' mode: processes of creation which, as 'existential nuclei, autopoietic machines', engender 'unprecedented, unforeseen and unthinkable qualities of being'.

It is the third, 'autopoietic' mode which he takes as his new aesthetic paradigm. Whereas the first two modes remain bound to one or more forms of territorial limit, through transposition or polar opposition, art and aesthetics exercised autopoietically have the capacity to encompass and respond to all the aspects of any object or 'Universe of value' with which they come into contact. The machine, understood aesthetically, displays 'the finitude relative to its life and death, the production of proto-alterity in the register of its environment and of its multiple implications, its incorporeal genetic filiations'. But put in this position of ontological priority, the aesthetic has to address ethical questions. What happens once one goes beyond pre-established schemas? How are we to attribute responsibility after the 'explosion of the individuation of the subject'. Guattari confronts these by drawing out from his ontology a chaosmotic, 'crystalline' transmonadism: a meshing process which grants chaos a consistency in virtue of its constant promotion of the limits of territorialization. The sidelining of the rhizomatic as an Assemblage whose enunciative power is limited ontologically (noted above) suggests a divergence from Deleuze but, given the nature of their collaborations, a difference of this kind cannot be dismissed as the rejection of or outright departure from a concept. The chapter also establishes the importance of Guattari for contemporary visual art in the mind of French critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud. In his *Relational Aesthetics,* Bourriaud singles out Guattari's machinic 'production of subjectivity' as being the only serious contender within contemporary aesthetic theory for exploring art's capacity to address the loss of 'directly experienced' human relations in society.[11]

Notes

1 B. Massumi, 'Translator's foreword: pleasures of philosophy', in G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans. B. Massumi, London: Continuum, p. x.
2 F. Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm,* trans. P. Bains and J. Pefanis, Sydney: Power Publications, 1995, p. 10.
3 Ibid., p. 22.
4 Ibid., p. 120.
5 Ibid., p. 120.
6 G. Genosko, *Felix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction,* London: Continuum, 2002, p. 159.
7 Guattari, *Chaosmosis,* p. 23.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 24.
10 Ibid., p. 27.
11 N. Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* trans. S. Pleasance, F. Woods, and M. Copeland, Dijon: Les presses du reel, 2002, pp. 9, 87.

■ ■ ■

THE NEW AESTHETIC PARADIGM

FÉLIX GUATTARI

It was only quite late in Western history that art detached itself as a specific activity concerned with a particularised axiological reference. Dance, music, the elaboration of plastic forms and signs on the body, on objects and on the ground were, in archaic societies, intimately connected with ritual activities and religious representations. Equally, social relations, economic and matrimonial exchanges, were, in the group life, hardly discernible from what I proposed calling territorialised Assemblages of enunciation. Through diverse modes of semiotisation, systems

of representation and multireferenced practices, these assemblages managed to crystallise complementary segments of subjectivity. They released social alterity through the union of filiation and alliance; they induced personal ontogenesis through the operation of peer groups and initiations, such that individuals found themselves enveloped by a number of transversal collective identities or, if one prefers, found themselves situated at the intersection of numerous vectors of partial subjectivation. In these conditions, an individual's psychism wasn't organised into interiorised faculties but was connected to a range of expressive and practical registers in direct contact with social life and the outside world. Such an interpenetration of the socius with material activities and modes of semiotisation leaves little place for a division and specialisation of work – the notion of work itself remaining blurred – and, even less, the disengagement of an aesthetic sphere distinct from other spheres (economic, social, religious or political).

It is not my intention to retrace, even summarily, the diverse paths of deterritorialisation of these territorialised Assemblages of enunciation. Let us just note that their general evolution will move towards an accentuation of the individuation of subjectivity, towards a loss of its polyvocality – simply consider the multiplication of names attributed to an individual in many archaic societies – and towards an autonomisation of Universes of value of the order of the divine, the good, the true, the beautiful, of power.... This sectorisation of modes of valorisation is now so deeply rooted in the cognitive apprehension of our era that it is difficult for us to trace its economy when we try to decode past societies. How can we imagine, for example, that a Renaissance prince did not buy works of art but attached to himself masters whose fame reflected on his prestige. Corporatist subjectivity with its pious implications for master artisans of the Middle Ages who built the cathedrals remains obscure to us. We cannot restrain ourselves from aesthetising a rupestral art which, to all appearances, had an essentially technological and cultural significance. Thus any reading of the past is inevitably overcoded by our references to the present. Coming to terms with this does not mean that we should unify fundamentally heterogeneous points of view. A few years ago an exhibition in New York presented cubist works and productions of what is generally called primitive art side by side. Formal, formalist and ultimately quite superficial correlations were made, the two series of creations being detached from their respective contexts – on the one side, tribal, ethnic, mythical; on the other, cultural, historical, economic. We shouldn't forget that the fascination that African, Oceanic and Indian art exercised on the cubists was not only of a plastic order but was associated with an exoticism of the period, informed by exploration, colonial expeditions, travel journals, adventure novels, whose aura of mystery was intensified by photography, cinema, sound recordings and by the development of field ethnology. If it is not illegitimate, and doubtless inevitable, to project onto the past the aesthetic paradigms of modernity, it can only be on the condition we recognise the relative and virtual character of the constellations of Universes of value brought about by this kind of recomposition.

Science, technology, philosophy, art and human affairs confront respectively the constraints and resistances of specific materials which they loosen and articulate within given limits. They do this with the help of codes, know-how and historical teachings which lead them to close certain doors and open other ones. The relations between the finite modes of these materials and the infinite attributes of the Universes of the possible they imply are different within each of these activities. Philosophy, for example, generates its own register of creative constraints, secretes its material of textual reference; it projects their finitude onto an infinite power corresponding to the auto-positioning and auto-consistency of its key concepts, at least at each mutant phase of its development. For their part, the paradigms of techno-science place the emphasis on an objectal

world of relations and functions, systematically bracketing out subjective affects, such that the finite, the delimited and coordinatable, always takes precedence over the infinite and its virtual references. With art, on the contrary, the finitude of the sensible material becomes a support for the production of affects and percepts which tend to become more and more eccentred with respect to preformed structures and coordinates. Marcel Duchamp declared: 'art is a road which leads towards regions which are not governed by time and space.' The different domains of thought, action and sensibility position, in dissimilar ways, their movement from infinity into the passage of time, or rather into epochs capable of returning to or intersecting each other. For example, theology, philosophy and music today no longer compose a constellation as strong as during the Middle Ages. The metabolism of the infinite, proper to each assemblage, is not fixed once and for all. And when an important mutation appears within a domain, it can have 'fallout,' it can transversally contaminate many other domains (for example, the effect on the arts and literature of the potentially unlimited reproducibility of text and image by the printing press, or the power of cognitive transference acquired by mathematical algorithms in the sciences).

The aesthetic power of feeling, although equal in principle with the other powers of thinking philosophically, knowing scientifically, acting politically, seems on the verge of occupying a privileged position within the collective Assemblages of enunciation of our era. But before approaching this issue, it is necessary to further clarify its position within the anterior assemblages.

Let us return to the territorialised Assemblages of enunciation. Strictly speaking, they don't constitute a particular historical stage. Though they may characterise societies without writing or State, we can find relics or even active renaissances of them in developed capitalist societies – and without doubt they can be thought to hold a significant place in post-capitalist societies. Aspects of this kind of polysemic, animistic, transindividual subjectivity can equally be found in the worlds of infancy, madness, amorous passion and artistic creation. It might also be better here to speak of a proto-aesthetic paradigm, to emphasise that we are not referring to institutionalised art, to its works manifested in the social field, but to a dimension of creation in a nascent state, perpetually in advance of itself, its power of emergence subsuming the contingency and hazards of activities that bring immaterial Universes into being. A residual horizon of discursive time (time marked by social clocks), a perpetual duration, escapes the alternative of remembering-forgetting and lives with a stupefying intensity, the affect of territorialised subjectivity. Here the existential Territory becomes, at the same time, homeland, self-belonging, attachment to clan and cosmic effusion.

In this first illustration of an Assemblage, the category of space is in a position that can be described as globally aesthetised. Polyphonic spatial strata, often concentric, appear to attract and colonise all the levels of alterity that in other respects they engender. In relation to them, objects constitute themselves in a transversal, vibratory position, conferring on them a soul, a becoming ancestral, animal, vegetal, cosmic. These objectities-subjectities are led to work for themselves, to incarnate themselves as an animist nucleus; they overlap each other, and invade each other to become collective entities half-thing half-soul, half-man half-beast, machine and flux, matter and sign.... The stranger, the strange, evil alterity are dispelled into a menacing exterior. But the spheres of exteriority are not radically separated from the interior. Bad internal objects have to respond to everything governing the exterior worlds. In fact, there isn't really any exteriority: collective territorialised subjectivity is hegemonic; it folds one Universe of value into another in a general movement of folding over on itself. It gives rhythm to times and spaces at the pleasure of its interior tempo, its ritual refrains. The events of the macro-cosm are assimilated to those of the micro-cosm – to which they are also accountable. Space and time are thus never neutral receptacles; they must be accomplished, engendered by productions of subjectivity involving chants, dances, stories about ancestors and gods.... Here there is no effort bearing on material forms that does not bring forth immaterial entities. Inversely, every drive towards a deterritorialised infinity is

accompanied by a movement of folding onto territorialised limits, correlative to a jouissance in the passage to the collective for-itself and its fusional and initiatory mysteries.

With deterritorialised assemblages, each sphere of valorisation erects a transcendent autonomised pole of reference: the Truth of logical idealities, the Good of moral will, the Law of public space, the Capital of economic exchangism, the Beautiful of the aesthetic domain.... This carving up of transcendence is consecutive to an individuation of subjectivity, which itself is divided up into modular faculties such as Reason, Understanding, Will, Affectivity.... The segmentation of the infinite movement of deterritorialisation is accompanied by a reterritorialisation, this time incorporeal; an immaterial reification. The valorisation which, in the preceding illustration, was polyphonic and rhizomatic, becomes bipolarised, Manicheanised, hierarchised and, in particularising its components, tends, in a certain way, to become sterilised. Dualisms in an impasse, like the oppositions between the sensible and the intelligible, thought and extensity, the real and the imaginary, involve a recourse to transcendent, omnipotent and homogenetic instances: God, Being, Absolute Spirit, Energy, The Signifier.... The old interdependence of territorialised values is thus lost, as are the experimentation, rituals and bricolages which led to their invocation and provocation – with the risk that they would reveal themselves as evanescent, dumb, without 'surety' and even dangerous. Transcendent value presents itself as immovable, always already there and thus always going to stay there. From its perspective, subjectivity remains in perpetual lack, guilty a priori, or at the very least in a state of 'unlimited procrastination' (following Kafka's expression in *The Trial*). The 'lie of the ideal' as Nietzsche wrote, becomes 'the curse on reality.'[1] Thus modular subjectivity has no connection with the old dimension of the emergence of values which are neutralised under the weight of codes, rules and laws decreed by the transcendent enunciator. It is no longer the result of the changing contours of an intrication of spheres of valorisation secured to matters of expression – it is recomposed, as reified individuation, from Universals laid out according to an arborescent hierarchy. Imprescriptible laws, duties and norms take the place of the old prohibitions which always arranged a place for conjuration and transgression.

This sectorisation and bipolarisation of values can be defined as capitalistic due to the neutralisation, the systematic dequalification, of the materials of expression from which they proceed – which puts them into the orbit of the economic valorisation of Capital, treating as formally equal the values of desire, use values, exchange values, and which puts differential qualities and non-discursive intensities under the exclusive control of binary and linear relations. Subjectivity is standardised through a communication which evacuates as much as possible trans-semiotic and amodal enunciative compositions. Thus it slips towards the progressive effacement of polysemy, prosody, gesture, mimicry and posture, to the profit of a language rigorously subjected to scriptural machines and their mass media avatars. In its extreme contemporary forms it amounts to an exchange of information tokens calculable as bits and reproducible on computers. Modular individuation thus breaks up the complex overdeterminations between the old existential Territories in order to remodel the mental Faculties, a self, organs, personological, sexual and familial modalities of alterity, as so many pieces compatible with the mechanics of social domination. In this type of deterritorialised assemblage, the capitalist Signifier, as simulacrum of the imaginary of power, has the job of overcoding all the other Universes of value. Thus it extends to those who inhabit the domain of percept and aesthetic affect, who nevertheless remain – faced with the invasion of canonical redundancies and thanks to the precarious reopening of lines of flight from finite strata to incorporeal infinity – nuclei of resistance of resingularisation and heterogenesis.

Capitalistic deterritorialised Assemblages do not constitute well defined historical periods – any more than do emergent territorialised Assemblages. (Capitalistic drives are found at the

heart of the Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Chinese empires, then throughout the whole of classical Antiquity.) The third type of processual Assemblage will be even more difficult to delimit, since it is only presented here prospectively, from traces and symptoms it appears to manifest today. Rather than marginalising the aesthetic paradigm, it confers on it a key position of transversality with respect to other Universes of value, from which it intensifies, each in its own way, creationist nuclei of autopoietic consistency. However, the end of the autarky and desertification of the Universes of value in the previous illustration is not synonymous with a return to the territorialised aggregation of emergent Assemblages. One does not fall back from the regime of reductionist transcendence onto the reterritorialisation of the movement of infinity in finite modes. The general (and relative) aesthetisation of the diverse Universes of value leads to a different type of re-enchantment of the expressive modalities of subjectivation. Magic, mystery and the demonic will no longer emanate, as before, from the same totemic aura. Existential Territories become diversified, heterogenised. The event is no longer enclosed in myth; it becomes a nucleus of processual relay. The incessant clash of the movement of art against established boundaries (already there in the Renaissance, but above all in the modern era), its propensity to renew its materials of expression and the ontological texture of the percepts and affects it promotes brings about if not a direct contamination of other domains then at the least a highlighting and a re-evaluation of the creative dimensions that traverse all of them. Patently, art does not have a monopoly on creation, but it takes its capacity to invent mutant coordinates to extremes: it engenders unprecedented, unforeseen and unthinkable qualities of being. The decisive threshold constituting this new aesthetic paradigm lies in the aptitude of these processes of creation to auto-affirm themselves as existential nuclei, autopoietic machines. We can already sense the lifting of shackles from the sciences constituted by the reference to a transcendent Truth as the guarantee of its principle of consistency, which increasingly appears to relate to operational modelisations that stick as close as possible to immanent empiricism. But in any event, whatever the detours of History, social creativity seems called upon to expropriate its old rigid ideological structures, in particular those which served as a guarantee of the eminence of State power and those which still make a veritable religion out of the capitalist market. If we turn for a moment to a discipline like psychoanalysis, which claimed to affirm itself as scientific, it is increasingly clear that it has everything to gain from putting itself under the aegis of this new type of aesthetic processual paradigm. Only in this way can it reacquire the creativity of its wild years at the turn of the century. Its vocation (depending on apparatuses, renewed procedures and references open to change) is to engender a subjectivity free from adaptive modelisations and capable of connecting with the singularities and mutations of our era. We can multiply the examples. In every domain we could find the same interlacing of three tendencies: an ontological heterogenification of Universes of reference deployed across what I have called the movement of infinity; an abstract, machinic transversality articulating the multitudes of finite interfaces which manifest these Universes in the same hypertext[2] or plane of consistency; a multiplication and particularisation of nuclei of autopoietic consistency (existential Territories). This processual aesthetic paradigm works with (and is worked by) scientific and ethical paradigms. It is installed transversally to technoscience because technoscience's machinic Phylums are in essence creative, and because this creativity tends to connect with the creativity of the artistic process. But to establish such a bridge, we have to shed our mechanist visions of the machine and promote a conception which encompasses all of its aspects: technological, biological, informatic, social, theoretical and aesthetic. Once again, it is the aesthetic machine which seems to be in the best position to disclose some of its often unrecognised but essential dimensions: the finitude relative to its life and death, the production of proto-alterity in the register of its environment and of its multiple implications, its incorporeal genetic filiations.

The new aesthetic paradigm has ethico-political implications because to speak of creation is to speak of the responsibility of the creative instance with regard to the thing created, inflection of the state of things, bifurcation beyond pre-established schemas, once again taking into account the fate of alterity in its extreme modalities. But this ethical choice no longer emanates from a transcendent enunciation, a code of law or a unique and all-powerful god. The genesis of enunciation is itself caught up in the movement of processual creation. We see this clearly, with scientific enunciation, but always with multiple heads: an individual head, of course, but also a collective head, an institutional head, a machinic head with experimental apparatuses, informatics, data banks, artificial intelligence.... The process of differentiating these machinic interfaces fragments the autopoietic enunciative nuclei and renders them partial to the extent that it itself deploys itself everywhere across the fields of virtuality of Universes of reference. But how, with this explosion of the individuation of the subject and this fragmentation of interfaces, can we still speak of Universes of value? No longer aggregated and territorialised (as in the first illustration of Assemblage) or autonomised and transcendentalised (as in the second), they are now crystallised in singular and dynamic constellations which envelop and make constant use of these two modes of subjective and machinic production. One must never confuse here machinism and mechanism. Machinism, in the way that I understand it, implies a double process – autopoietic-creative and ethical-ontological (the existence of a 'material of choice') – which is utterly foreign to mechanism. This is why the immense machinic interconnectedness, the way the world consists today, finds itself in an autofoundational position of its own bringing into being. Being does not precede machinic essence; the process precedes the heterogenesis of being.

Emergence tied to collective Territories, transcendent Universals, processual Immanence: three modalities of praxis and subjectivation specifying three types of enunciative Assemblage involving equally the psyche, human societies, the living world, machinic species and, in the last analysis, the Cosmos itself. Such a 'transversalist' enlargement of enunciation should lead to the fall of the 'ontological Iron Curtain' (following Pierre Lévy's expression) that the philosophical tradition erected between mind and matter. The establishment of such a transversalist bridge leads us to postulate the existence of a certain type of entity inhabiting both domains, such that the incorporeals of value and virtuality become endowed with an ontological depth equal to that of objects set in energetico-spatio-temporal coordinates. It is less a question of an identity of being which would traverse regions, retaining its heterogeneous texture, than of an identical processual persistence. Neither a Platonic Whole, nor an Aristotelian Prime Mover, these transversal entities appear like a machinic hyper-text – establishing themselves far beyond a simple, neutral support for forms and structures at the absolute horizon of all processes of creation. Thus one does not situate qualities or attributes as secondary in relation to being or substance; nor does one commence with being as a pure empty container (and a priori) of all the possible modalities of existing. Being is first auto-consistency, auto-affirmation, existence for-itself deploying particular relations of alterity. The for-itself and the for-others stop being the privilege of humanity; they crystallise everywhere that machinic interfaces engender disparity and, in return, are founded by it. The emphasis is no longer placed on Being – as general ontological equivalent, which, in the same way as other equivalents (Capital, Energy, Information, the Signifier), envelops, encloses and desingularises the process – it is placed on the manner of being, the machination producing the existent, the generative praxes of heterogeneity and complexity. The phenomenological apprehension of being existing as inert facticity only occurs in the case of limit experiences such as existential nausea or melancholic depression. Awareness of machinic being, on the other hand, will instead be deployed across multiple and polyphonic spatial and temporal envelopments and across potential, rational and sufficient developments in terms of algorithms, regularities and laws

whose texture is just as real as its actual manifestations. And here once again emerges the thematic of virtual ecology and ecosophy.

The machinic entities which traverse these different registers of the actualised world and incorporeal Universes are two-faced like Janus. They exist concurrently in a discursive state within molar Fluxes, in a presuppositional relationship with a corpus of possible semiotic propositions, and in a non-discursive state within enunciative nuclei embodied in singular existential Territories, and in Universes of ontological reference which are non-dimensioned and non-coordinated in any extrinsic way.

How can we associate the non-discursive, infinite character of the texture of these incorporeals with the discursive finitude of energetico-spatio-temporal Fluxes and their propositional correlates? Pascal shows us a way in his response to the question: Do you think it is impossible that God is infinite and indivisible? '... I would like to show you something infinite and indivisible. It is a point which moves everywhere at infinite speed; because it is in all places and whole in each place.'[3] In fact only an entity animated by an infinite speed (that is to say no longer respecting Einstein's cosmological limit of the speed of light) can hope to include both a limited referent and incorporeal fields of possibles and thereby give credibility and consistency to the contradictory terms of a proposition. But with this Pascalian speed deploying an 'infinite and indivisible thing' we are still only left with an ontologically homogeneous infinity, passive and undifferentiated. The creativity intrinsic to the new aesthetic paradigm demands more active and activating folds of this infinity, in two modalities, which we will now examine, whose double articulation is characteristic of the machine in the wider sense envisaged here.

An initial chaosmic folding consists in making the powers of chaos co-exist with those of the highest complexity. It is by a continuous coming-and-going at an infinite speed that the multiplicities of entities differentiate into ontologically heterogeneous complexions and become chaotised in abolishing their figural diversity and by homogenising themselves within the same being-non-being. In a way, they never stop diving into an umbilical chaotic zone where they lose their extrinsic references and coordinates, but from where they can re-emerge invested with new charges of complexity. It is during this chaosmic folding that an interface is installed – an interface between the sensible finitude of existential Territories and the trans-sensible infinitude of the Universes of reference bound to them. Thus one oscillates, on one hand, between a finite world of reduced speed, where limits always loom up behind limits, constraints behind constraints, systems of coordinates behind other systems of coordinates, without ever arriving at the ultimate tangent of a being-matter which recedes everywhere and, on the other hand, Universes of infinite speed where being can't be denied anymore, where it gives itself in its intrinsic differences, in its heterogenetic qualities. The machine, every species of machine, is always at the junction of the finite and infinite, at this point of negotiation between complexity and chaos.

These two types of ontological consistency – heterogenetic being-quality and homogenetic being-matter-nothingness – do not involve any Manichean dualism, since they constitute themselves from the same plane of entitative immanence and envelop each other. But the price to pay for this initial level of immanence and complexity is that it does not deliver the key to the stabilisation, localisation and rhythmisation of decelerating chaosmic stases and strata, of 'freeze framings' of complexity, of what prevents the latter from turning back and from once again being swallowed up by chaos and of what leads them, on the contrary, to engender limits, regularities, constraints, laws, and everything that the second autopoietic folding must assume.

In fact, it is not legitimate to try to intercept finite contingency on such a direct route between chaos and complexity. There are two reasons for this. On one hand, the fleeting complexion which emerges from chaos to return there at infinite speed is itself the virtual bearer of reduced speeds. On the other, the chaosmic umbilicus, insofar as it develops consistency, also has a role to play in the birth of finitude with its two functions of existential grasping and transmonadism. Thus, we will be led to superpose the immanence of infinity and finitude onto the immanence of complexity and chaos; we will have to assume that the primordial slowing down manifested in finite speeds, proper to limits and extrinsic coordinates and to the promotion of particularised points of view, inhabits chaos just as much as the infinite entitative speeds which attempt to domesticate philosophy with their conceptual creations. The movement of infinite virtuality of incorporeal complexions carries in itself the possible manifestation of all the components and all the enunciative assemblages actualisable in finitude. So chaosmosis does not oscillate mechanically between zero and infinity, being and nothingness, order and disorder: it rebounds and irrupts on states of things, bodies and the autopoietic nuclei it uses as a support for deterritorialisation; it is relative chaotisation in the confrontation with heterogeneous states of complexity. Here we are dealing with an infinity of virtual entities infinitely rich in possibles, infinitely enrichable through creative processes. It is a force for seizing the creative potentiality at the root of sensible finitude – 'before' it is applied to works, philosophical concepts, scientific functions and mental and social objects – which founds the new aesthetic paradigm. The potentiality of the event-advent of limited speeds at the heart of infinite speeds constitutes the latter as creative intensities. Infinite speeds are loaded with finite speeds, with a conversion of the virtual into the possible, of the reversible into irreversible, of the deferred into difference. The same entitative multiplicities constitute virtual Universes and possible worlds; this potentiality of finite, sensible bifurcation inscribed in an irreversible temporality remains in an absolute, reciprocal presupposition with a-temporal reversibility, the incorporeal eternal return of infinitude.

A throw of dice
Never
Even indeed when thrown in eternal circumstances

From the depths of a shipwreck …

This irruption of the irreversible, these choices of finitude can only be framed – so as to acquire a relative consistency – on condition that they are inscribed on a memory of being and positioned in relation to axes of ordination and reference. The autopoietic fold responds to these two demands by putting into action its two inextricably associated facets of appropriation (or existential grasping) and trans-monadic inscription. But the grasping only confers auto-consistency on the monad to the extent that it deploys a transmonadic exteriority and alterity such that neither the first nor second benefit from a relation of precedence, and that one cannot approach either of them without referring to the other.

Let us nevertheless start with the grasping side: it establishes a 'holding together' between:

– the respective autonomy of the complexion and its chaosmic umbilicus, their distinction, their absolute separation;
– and their equally absolute concatenation, within the same plane of double immanence.

Our experience of such ambivalent positioning and fusional abolition is given through the apprehension of Kleinian partial objects – the breast, faeces, the penis… which crystallise the self even as they dissolve it in projective-introjective relations with the other and with the Cosmos. An incorporeal complexion, snatched up by grasping, will only receive its character of finitude if the advent-event

of its encounter with a transmonadic line occurs, which will trigger the exit, the expulsion of its infinite speed, its primordial deceleration. Before this crossing of the threshold, the existence of the incorporeal complexion, just as much as that of the composition and of the assemblage – candidates for actualisation – remains aleatory and evanescent. The complex entitative multiplicity is only indexed by an autopoietic nucleus. Here, we evoke the experience of earliest dream recollection with the wild flight of its traits of complexity. Everything really begins when transmonadism enters the scene to inscribe and transform this first autopoietic coupling. We too must start again from its side.

The permanent metabolism of nihilation, the depolarisation and dissipation of the diverse that shapes the monad, prevents it from delimiting a distinctive identity. The fusional nothing of a 'given' monad inhabits the nothing of another monad and so on to infinity, in a course of multidirectional relays with stroboscopic resonances. How does such a trail of nihilation, at once omnipotent and impotent, come to be the means of inscription for a reappearance of finitude, how does it become deterritorialisation? It is because where there was only infinite disappearance, absolute dispersion, the transmonadic slide introduces an ordered linearity – one moves from one point of consistency to another – thereby allowing the ordination of incorporeal complexions to crystallise. Chaosmosis functions here like the pickup head of a Turing machine. The chaotic nothing spins and unwinds complexity, puts it in relation with itself and with what is other to it, with what alters it. This actualisation of difference carries out an aggregative selection onto which limits, constants and states of things can graft themselves. Already we are no longer at the speeds of infinite dissolution. There is something left over, a remainder, the selective erection of semblances and dissemblances. In symbiosis with infinite complexions, finite compositions insert themselves within extrinsic coordinates, enunciative assemblages fit together in relations of alterity. Linearity, the matrix of all ordination, is already a slowing down, an existential stickiness. It might seem paradoxical that it is the persistence of a nihilation – or rather of an intensive deterritorialisation – which gives its corporeal consistency to autopoietic states of things and points of view. But only this type of linear and rhizomatic distancing can select, arrange and proportion a complexity which will now live under the double regime of a discursive slowing down and of an absolute speed of non-separability. The virtual complexion which has been selected is then stamped with an irreversible facticity enveloped by a proto-temporality that can be described as instantaneous and eternal and easily recognised in the phenomenological apprehension of Universes of value. Transmonadism through the effect of retro-activity crystallises within the primitive chaotic soup spatial coordinates, temporal causalities, energy levels, possibilities for the meeting of complexions, a whole ontological 'sexuality' composed by axiological bifurcations and mutations. In this way, the second fold of autopoietic ordination – intensely active and creationist – separates from the inherent passivity of the first chaosmic fold. The passivity will transform itself into a limit, a framing, a sensitive refrain out of which an enrichment of finite and 'controlled' complexity can emerge – while ontological heterogeneity will transform itself into alterity. Nothing will work until such an event-advent of primordial slowing-down and selection has happened – from the moment it is inscribed on the transmonadic, autopoietic network. Such an aleatory limit of a virtual point of view becomes a necessary and sufficient accident in the extraction of a fold of contingency, or a 'choice' of finitude. From now on we have to make do with it, start from there, return to it and circle around.

Through this precipitation of crystals of finitude and this declination of attractors of the possible, the limits of territorialisation will be irremediably promoted – limits such as those of relativity and of photon exchange, of regularities and constraints; limits like that of a quantum of action, limits that scientific assemblages will semiotise into functions, constants and laws. But the decisive point remains that the transmonadic breakout, far from resolving itself on the fixed

horizon of nihilation, curls up along an infinite twisting line of flight whose circumvolutions, like those of strange attractors, give chaos a consistency at the intersection of the actualisation of finite configurations and an always possible processual recharge – the medium for ordinal and novel bifurcations, for energetic conversions escaping the entropy of territorialised stratifications – and open to the creation of mutant assemblages of enunciation.

It is a striving towards this ontological root of creativity that is characteristic of the new processual paradigm. It engages the composition of enunciative assemblages actualising the compossibility of two infinities, the active and the passive. A striving that is in no way constrained, catatonic or abstract like those of capitalistic monotheisms, but animated by a mutant creationism, always to be re-invented, always about to be lost. The irreversibility belonging to the events-advents of autopoietic grasping and transmonadism is consubstantial with a permanent resistance to circular, reterritorialising repetitions and with a constant renewal of aesthetic boundaries, scientific apparatuses of partial observation, philosophical conceptual montages and the establishment of 'habitats' (*oikos*) that are political or psychoanalytical (ecosophy). To produce new infinities from a submersion in sensible finitude, infinities not only charged with virtuality but with potentialities actualisable in given situations, circumventing or dissociating oneself from the Universals itemised by traditional arts, philosophy, and psychoanalysis: all things that imply the permanent promotion of different enunciative assemblages, different semiotic recourses, an alterity grasped at the point of its emergence – non-xenophobic, non-racist, non-phallocratic – intensive and processual becomings, a new love of the unknown.... In the end, a politics and ethics of singularity, breaking with consensus, the infantile 'reassurance' distilled by dominant subjectivity. Dogmatisms of every kind investing and obscuring these points of creationism, points which necessitate a permanent confrontation (in the analysis of the unconscious as in all the other disciplines) with the collapsus of non-sense, with insoluble contradictions – the manifestations of short-circuits between complexity and chaos. For example, the democratic chaos which conceals a multitude of vectors of resingularisation, attractors of social creativity in search of actualisation. No question here of aleatory neo-liberalism with its fanaticism for the market economy, for a univocal market, for a market of redundancies of capitalist power, but of a heterogenesis of systems of valorisation and the spawning of new social, artistic and analytical practices.

So the question of inter-monadic transversality is not simply of a speculative nature. It involves calling into question disciplinary boundaries, the solipsistic closure of Universes of value, prevalent today in a number of domains. Let us take as a final example an open redefinition of the body, so necessary for the promotion of therapeutic assemblages of psychosis: the body conceived as intersection of partial autopoietic components, with multiple and changing configurations, working collectively as well as individually; all 'the bodies' – the specular body, the fantasmatic body, the neurological corporeal schema, the biological and organic soma, the immune self,[4] the personological identity within familial and environmental eco-systems, collective faciality, refrains (mythical, religious, ideological...). So many existential territorialities linked by the same transversal chaosmosis, so many monadic 'points of view' terraced or structured across fractal ascents and descents, authorising a combined strategy of analytical approaches (institutional psychotherapeutic, psychopharmalogical) and personal recomposition that is either delirious or of an aesthetic character.... It is one and the same thing to declare these territories partial and yet open to the most diverse fields of alterity: this clarifies how the most autistic enclosure can be in direct contact with ambient social constellations and the machinic Unconscious, historical complexes and cosmic aporias.

Translated by Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis

Notes

1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, trans. W. Kaufmann, New York: Vintage, 1989, p. 218.
2 Cf. Pierre Lévy, op. cit.
3 Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968, p. 153.
4 Anne-Marie Moulin, *Le dernier langage de la médecine. Histoire de l'immunologie de Pasteur au sida*, Paris: PUF, 1991.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Félix Guattari in English

Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia I (with G. Deleuze; 1972), trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H.R. Laine, New York: Viking Press, 1977.
Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature (with G. Deleuze; 1975), trans. D. Polan, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics (1977), trans. R. Sheed, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984.
A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia II (with G. Deleuze; 1980), trans. B. Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
On the Line (with G. Deleuze), ed. S. Lotringer, New York: Semiotext(e), 1983.
The Three Ecologies (1989), trans. I. Pindar and P. Sutton, London: Athlone, 2000.
Communists Like Us: New Spaces of Liberty, New Lines of Alliance (with A. Negri), trans. M. Ryan, New York: Semiotext(e), 1990.
What is Philosophy? (with G. Deleuze; 1991), trans. G. Burchill, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm, trans. P. Bains and J. Pefanis, Sydney: Power Publications, 1995.
Chaosophy: Texts and Interviews 1972–1977, ed. S. Lotringer, trans. C. Wolff, New York: Semiotext(e), 1995.
Soft Subversions, ed. S. Lotringer, trans. D.L. Sweet, C. Wiener, *et al.*, New York: Semiotext(e), 1996.
The Guattari Reader, ed. G. Genosko, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

Further reading

Introductions to Guattari are given by Genosko (2002, 2009). His collaborations with Deleuze are assessed by Alliez (2004), Bogue (1989), Goodchild (1997), Holland (1999), Massumi (1992), Stivale (1998), and Watson (2009). Guattari's aesthetic philosophy is explored by Arnott (1999), Ballantyne (2007), Massumi (2002), O'Sullivan (2006) and Zepke (2005, 2006), with Kaufman and Heller (1998), O'Sullivan and Zepke (2008), and Porter (2009) addressing the relation between aesthetics and politics. For appraisals of his concept of ecology, see Halsey (2005), and Herzogenrath (2008). Studies of different aspects of his thought are given by Buchanan (the body; 1997), Genosko (methodology; 2003), Mackenzie (criticism; 1997), Massumi (expression; 1997), and Watson (performativity; 2005).

E. Alliez, *The Signature of the World: What is Deleuze and Guattari's Philosophy?*, trans. E.R. Albert and A. Toscano, London: Continuum, 2004.
S. Arnott, 'In the shadow of chaos: Deleuze and Guattari on philosophy, science, and art', *Philosophy Today*, 1999, vol. 43, pp. 49–56.
A. Ballantyne, *Deleuze & Guattari for Architects*, New York: Routledge, 2007.
R. Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, New York: Routledge, 1989.
I. Buchanan, 'The problem of the body in Deleuze and Guattari, or, what can a body do?', *Body and Society*, 1997, vol. 3, pp. 73–92.
G. Genosko, *Félix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction*, London: Continuum, 2002.
———, 'Félix Guattari: towards a transdisciplinary metamethodology', *Angelaki*, 2003, vol. 8, pp. 129–40.
———, *Félix Guattari: A Critical Introduction*, London: Pluto Press, 2009.
P. Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997.
M. Halsey, 'Ecology and machinic thought: Nietzsche, Deleuze, Guattari', *Angelaki*, 2005, vol. 10, pp. 33–56.
B. Herzogenrath (ed.), *Deleuze/Guattari and Ecology*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

E. Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis*, New York: Routledge, 1999.
E. Kaufman and J. Heller (eds), *Deleuze & Guattari: New Mappings in Philosophy, Politics and Culture*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
I. Mackenzie, 'Creativity as criticism: the philosophical constructivism of Deleuze and Guattari', *Radical Philosophy*, 1997, vol. 86, pp. 7–18.
B. Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992.
———, 'Deleuze, Guattari, and the philosophy of expression', *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, 1997, vol. 24, pp. 745–82.
——— (ed.), *A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari*, London: Routledge, 2002.
S. O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
S. O'Sullivan and S. Zepke (eds), *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New*, London: Continuum, 2008.
R. Porter, *Deleuze and Guattari: Aesthetics and Politics*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009.
C.J. Stivale, *The Twofold Thought of Deleuze and Guattari: Intersections and Animations*, New York: Guilford, 1998.
J. Watson, 'Schizo-performativity? Neurosis and politics in Judith Butler and Félix Guattari', *Women*, 2005, vol. 16, pp. 305–20.
———, *Guattari's Diagrammatic Thought: Writing Between Lacan and Deleuze*, London: Continuum, 2009.
S. Zepke, *Art as Abstract Machine: Ontology and Aesthetics in Deleuze and Guattari*, London: Routledge, 2005.
———, 'The concept of art when art is not a concept: Deleuze and Guattari against conceptual art', *Angelaki*, 2006, vol. 11, pp. 157–66.

Chapter 37

JEAN-LUC NANCY

INTRODUCTION

The title of the chapter representing the French deconstructionist Jean-Luc Nancy (b. 1940) – 'Art, a Fragment' – is highly pertinent to his philosophy. The 'fragment', as Nancy theorizes it, is not something insubstantial, something broken away from a larger whole which can only offer a glimpse of what the whole might have been. Rather, the fragment is the fundamental unit of Nancy's ontology and, as such, presents a view of the world in which all identities, all meanings, are incomplete and sustained by their ragged or frayed edges, and the contact which these edges have with the edges of other meanings.

Nancy's deconstruction takes particular issue with Heidegger. Deconstruction can often be regarded as sharing Heidegger's interest in addressing the structures of thought which are always already active in allowing us to form an address in the first place. However, Nancy's engagement with Heidegger is more direct in as much as he accuses Heidegger of not developing the importance of *Mitsein* or 'being with' others in *Being and Time*. Heidegger seeks to explicate the fundamental structures which give rise to and locate human being (Dasein) in the world. As Ross points out, although Heidegger acknowledges that *Mitsein* is an important part of Dasein,[1] Dasein nevertheless remains for Heidegger a solitary mode of being: an account of the human which, while it departs from the Cartesian notion of an isolated subject, nevertheless retains the sense of isolation. For Nancy, *Mitsein* is crucial because it asserts the ontological priority of community. Community comes first: individual being is made possible by shared structures of understanding, rather than community being the end product of already existing individuals coalescing. The fragmentary significance of *Mitsein* lies in the assertion that experience, meaning, and thought are never complete within any one consciousness, but always incomplete, always awaiting reaction and participation from others, but without any endpoint.

The chapter 'Art, a Fragment', from *The Sense of the World*, sets out the partial or 'touching' role which art plays in his ontology of the fragment. 'Touch' and 'fragment' are related, mutually embracing phrases. As Nancy points out, there is in French the phrase the '*touche des sens*', the 'touch of the senses': the moment when sensory pleasure surprises us, stops us in our tracks, and briefly liberates us from ordinary ways of seeing or thinking; in Nancy's words, when sensory pleasure 'suspends the enchainment of signifying sense'. It is art's sensory or sensuous form which makes it significant for Nancy. In talking of 'the sense of the world', Nancy makes it clear that the meaning of the phrase is in question and, in fact, has to be in question: 'we cannot take the "sense of the world" (or "sense of existence" or "sense of life", and so on) to be a general category and then admit its particular species or modalities, without thereby losing the very *sense* of the expression'.[2] In addressing the sense of the world, the notion of 'sense' must remain open or incomplete, for if it were ever to be closed or completed, that would mean that the world is known, full stop, and cannot be encountered anew.

The importance of the senses in all of this is that they are forms of presentation, of 'being-toward-the-world'. More often than not, the senses are conceptualized in empiricist terms as channels of impressions which the human subject receives from the world. But here, Nancy is emphasizing their condition as a mode of encounter, a condition in which there is always 'something other' or 'something else'. In this regard, the senses are what he terms 'transimmanent': neither transcendental – objects or impressions possessed by a subject that is distinct from the world – nor immanent – a condition internal to the world or to any single, foundational ontological stratum. The senses are 'local', are 'zoned': each has its own particularity yet it also passes beyond itself, offers 'part of itself... to something outside of itself'. In a philosophical context where the conventional concepts of human subject and external world have been rejected, modes of presentation, of 'being-toward-the-world', such as meaning and the senses, and the events which might interrupt them, become crucial as the means by which being in the world is described and understood. Art, Nancy argues, as the sensuous form which touches us and suspends meaning, *presents* presentation. That is to say, in the moment of art, nothing is presented, nothing is said, other than the process of presentation itself. As Ross makes the point, art, for Nancy, 'could be described as presenting out of sensible relations the genesis or process of meaning'.[3] However, the presentation of presentation does not provide unmediated apprehension of being or the realization of a truth. Rather, it is truth as an act, an act of touching. Art fragments because it interrupts sense, and gives us the pleasure of realizing that our being-toward-the-world is always a condition of contact, of being in touch with being, where the touch will be local, zoned, incomplete.

There are echoes here (to draw on a different sensory modality, but one which is nevertheless in tune with Nancy's notion of fragment) with Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and Guattari, for different reasons in each case. In 'On Truth and Lie in an Extramoral Sense' (included in this volume), Nietzsche argues against the concept of the Cartesian self and offers an ontology in which subject and world emerge as epiphenomena from a prior, indefinable play of forces. The senses are presented as elements within this play of forces, with the transitions between them, one sense communing with another, becoming the principal mode through which meaning and identity are formulated. The idea that the senses are not channels but modes of encounter which precede division into subjective impression and external object is explored by Merleau-Ponty. Nancy even observes that the human body is something which is both sensor and sensed – it can see and be seen, touch and be touched; a vital relationship for Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology – but does not acknowledge his predecessor's account. Comparison with Guattari can be made on the grounds that he promotes subjectivity as a source of polyvocality or 'the many-voiced', an ecologically sensitized attentiveness to the world that stands in contrast to the apathy and externalization created by liberalism and market forces. While the 'fragment' does not feature in Guattari's philosophy, he nevertheless introduces an ontology which has subjectivity 'deterritorialized' or chewed up, so that it becomes ways of thinking and forms of behaviour which operate as tensional relationships between heterogeneous fields.

Notes

1 A. Ross, *The Aesthetic Paths of Philosophy: Presentation in Kant, Heidegger, Lacoue-Labarthe, and Nancy*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007, p. 155.
2 J.-L. Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, trans. J.S. Librett, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p. 7.
3 Ross, *Aesthetic Paths of Philosophy*, p. 153.

ART, A FRAGMENT

JEAN-LUC NANCY

By this time, no doubt, fragmentation, spacing, exposition, piecework, and exhaustion have begun to arrive at their most extreme limit. We have done so much fracturing, fraying, wounding, crumpling, splintering, fragilizing, shattering, and exceeding that we would seem to have begun to exceed excess itself. This is why worldliness may appear to be the reverse, in tiny pieces, of a totalization madly in love with itself.

Today, there is a chagrined, reactive, and vengeful tone in which this is often said. It gives its auditor to understand that our art, thought, and text are in ruin, and that one must call for a renewal. As in all such cases, this is nothing but a flight from the event and its truth.

There is certainly no lack of reasons for judging that a cycle should be completed, an epoch suspended, as is the role of any epoch: interruption, fragmentation. And something of the sort is indeed in the process of taking place.

However, nothing repeats itself, nothing ever comes back, except coming itself, which is never the same – but, rather, the indefinitely altered return of the same. That which has been fragmented will not be either reconstituted or reengendered – except by those for whom 'art' would consist in aping an absent *cosmos* out of contempt for the event of the world.

But, of course, that which has been fragmented – a certain configuration of art and of the work, a certain *cosmetics* of the 'beautiful' and the 'sublime' – has not simply disappeared in the process of being broken down. One must know first of all what remains in the fragments: where is the beautiful in the fragments of the beautiful? How does it come to be fragmented? In other words, and even if one supposes that nothing remains, if one supposes that fragmentation has properly dislocated the essence on which it supervened, one must ask oneself if this 'essence' has not itself been delivered, thrown, projected, and offered like what one would have to call, twisting Benoit Mandelbrot's word, a 'fractal essence.' (In this sense, rather than the contour of the 'fragment,' already outlined, the 'fractal' would designate the dynamics and the initiality of dif-fraction, the uneven tracing of 'fractal curves.') In still other words: in what direction are we to take the step from a fragmented cosmetics to an aesthetics of sensible tracing [*frayage*], and beyond this to the fragile permanence of 'art' in the drift of the 'worldly'?

From one fragment the other

One must attempt to distinguish between two different kinds of fragmentation. On the one hand, there is the fragmentation that corresponds to the genre and art of the fragment, whose history is closing before our eyes, and on the other hand, there is the fragmentation that is happening to us, and to 'art.' (Further, one must be careful not to oversimplify this opposition but, rather, to bear in mind that, although the second fragmentation – the one I have rather heavily called 'fractal essence' – is indeed *happening*, it is happening at a distance from us and happens to be coming toward us across the entire history of art, a history that this fragmentation has always worked on and on which it has always bestowed a *fractal sense*, as the diffraction and spacing of linear and cumulative histories.)

The fragmentation that will henceforth have to be regarded as classical, that is, romantic fragmentation, consists in a certain recognized, accepted, desired state of detachment and

isolation of the fragments. Its *end* is situated where the fragment collects itself into itself, folds or retracts its frayed and fragile borders back onto its own consciousness of being a fragment, and onto a new type of autonomy. Disruption transforms itself here into the gathering of itself into itself of the broken piece. The latter converts its finitude – its interruption, noncompletion, and in-finitude – into finish. In this finish, dispersion and fracturing absolutize their erratic contingency: they *absolve themselves* of their fractal character.

When Friedrich Schlegel compares the fragment to a hedgehog, he confers on it all the autonomy, finish, and aura of the 'little work of art.' Ultimately, it is only the 'little' size of the fragment that differentiates here between the art of the fragment and the art of the 'great' work.

Why 'little'? Behind the entire history of art since romanticism there has been an uneasiness about the great, the monumental, about all art of cosmological, cosmogonic, or theogonic dimensions, all 'sovereign art' in the 'grand style.' This uneasiness is a desire that, one way or another, ends in disaster: either it is infinitely disappointed, as in Nietzsche faced with Richard Wagner – and perhaps even in Wagner himself – or it considers itself to be disastrous and tears itself apart, from Arthur Rimbaud to Bataille and beyond. To this disaster, the 'little' – like a meteoric fragment detached from the sidereal fall – would have liked to provide an answer.

(The obscene sense of 'little' in Bataille belongs also to this configuration, as, for example, the following lines show: 'The "little" one: radiance of agony, of death, radiance of a dead star, fragmentation of the sky announcing death – beauty of the day at twilight.'[1] Even more than the loss of the 'great,' what occurs here is the contraction of anxiety before the emptiness of the heavens, the world precipitated into a state of worldlessness that leads to disgust [*le monde précipité dans l'immonde*].)

However, the little is coupled with the great in the sense that the little does not stop referring to the great. The extremity of the fragmentary is reached here as an exhaustion, an agony, that is, also as an exhausting struggle of the little against the great, and thus as a struggle of the little against its own anxiety, or as a struggle to affirm this anxiety as accomplishment and revelation. The fragment becomes at once an *end* (limit, fracture) and a *finish* (annulment of the fracture), the torn borders folded back into the sweetness of microcosmic self-enclosure. Exposition itself ends up as introjection, return to self.

The 'fractality' with which we will have to do from this point on – and which fragmentation also announced – is quite different. Instead of the ambiguous end of the fragment, it is a matter of the fraying of the edges of its trace [*son frayage*]. It is a matter of the frayed access [*l'accès frayé*] to a presentation, to a coming into presence – and by way of this coming into presence. For what is at stake can no longer be measured or unmeasured as a cosmology, theogony, or anthropogony. What makes up 'world' and 'sense' can no longer be determined as a given, accomplished, 'finished' presence but is intermingled with the coming, the in-finity of a coming into presence, or of an *e-venire*.

The event is not a 'taking-place': it is the incommensurability of coming to all taking-place, the incommensurability of spacing and fraying [*frayage*] to all space disposed in the present of a presentation. It is the *praes-entia* of being-present.[2] One could also formulate it by saying that it is *presentation itself*, distinguished this time from what would be the 'presentness' [*la présentité*] of a presence, as transitive being is distinguished from intransitive being. The event is presentation as gesture or motion, indeed, as emotion, and as fractal ex-position: presentation as fragmentation.

Thus, there are two different forms of extreme fragmentation: on the one hand, exhaustion and finish, and on the other hand, event and presentation. This does not mean that the fragments that are really produced, fragmentary works or documents, can be simply classified into one category or the other. Every fragment, and indeed every work in general, ever since there have been works (since Lascaux), can be seen as one or the other. But the question is this: once the

cosmetics and aesthetics of totality and fragment have been left behind, once the little as well as the great have been exhausted, does something still remain of (or for) art in this *coming* that no presence could ever *finish*? 'Happenings' and 'performance art,' and all of that which, within contemporary art, has revolved around the motif of the event (for example, Polaroid and video, the residual, the accidental, the aleatory, staining, interruption, and so on) – all of this seems to have either merely prolonged one posture or the other (the 'great' or the 'little') or merely continued to destroy, reduce, and shatter art. Moreover, the two gestures are not contradictory, and much seems to suggest that it is possible to say that art petrifies and fractures itself in the pose of its own end. Romantic irony, which Hegel saw as the element of this end, attained in this way its extreme of yawning subjectivity. It seems that one should no longer count on art for the 'coming' – for the breaking of the path [*frayage*] – of another sense. And yet, differing from Hegel (perhaps only) in this, we will not find it possible to call 'philosophy' the element responsible for the breaking of this path [*frayage*]. Nor, moreover, will we find it possible to give that element any other name.

But this circumstance itself traces out a path [*frayage*], indicates a coming, or indicates itself as coming. The exhaustion of *cosmos* and *mundus*, the end of the 'presentable' world, opens onto the worldliness of being. Being itself – existence – announces itself or insists anew, in an unprecedented way, and even if this way is *epeikeina tēs ousias*. What is coming is a birth that is neither a cosmogony nor a theogony nor an anthropogony. It can neither be assumed nor subsumed in either the work, form, art (little or great), or any finish. Rather, its presentation is a fragmentation – and its 'art' is apparently no longer distinguishable from the *ars* prior to the 'fine arts,' that is, from a *teknē* that is henceforth to be seen as infinitely finite, situated beyond all finished works. But how to present this 'fractal' birth?

In other words, the question is the following, taken up again as we take our departure from 'art' and its infinite end, but also as at least one aspect of the question of 'technology': if something remains beyond an aesthetics of the fragment, beyond the repeated echoes of the disaster and desire of 'great art,' if something remains *or if there is something that is coming anew* that would be like a 'more essential,' 'more primitive,' 'more original,' and consequently 'more unprecedented' and 'more future' fragmentation (but also by virtue of this a fragmentation from which would proceed in their way works of art as such), and if this fragmentation must have to do with the event of being that one also calls existence, and within existence with this – that it comes and 'essentially' does nothing but come (come-and-go, toward the world) – if then there is something like this, and if it has a proper place (but with what sort of 'propriety'?), a place where it exposes itself as such, is this place still (or in a new way) art? 'Art' in what sense?

Or, can one think of art not as an art *of* the fragment – remaining obedient to the work as finished totality – but as itself fragmentary and fractal, and of fragmentation as the presentation of being (of existence), tracing [*frayage*] of/in its totality?

'Aisthesis'

It is a matter, then, of the relations between art and sense.[3] If the 'absence' of sense – to take up Blanchot's word once again – defines the very sense of sense, and not its position or its modality, if this 'absence' is nothing other than the sense of being insofar as it is in play *as the existence that is its own sense*, in other words – the words that have in the history of art a singular echo – if sense is the nudity of existing, in what way can this *nudity* be or become the *subject* of art? (In what way, perhaps, has it already become the subject of art?)

What we are asking here is thus what makes art apt to disengage sense in this way, this sense of sense: that existence is (the surprise of) sense, without any other signification.

What we are asking here in the same movement is thus also if there is something in art that would be 'essential,' and how it might be 'essential,' to nude existence – and that would not come down to merely embellishing this existence. In other words, is art necessary to the articulation of sense in its 'absence,' in its 'surprise'? Is it necessary to the thought of the sense of the world? And how does this involve fragmentation?

It is necessary to take as our renewed point of departure the sense of sense as *aisthesis*, insofar as it implies neither transcendence nor immanence. The heterogeneous entelechy of the sensing/sensed, in the spatializing unity of its contact, implies relationship, in the form of being-affected-by, and consequently in the form of being-affectable-by, being-liable-to (of which intellection and intelligible sense are, after all, only modulations or modalizations, even affections of affect itself). Affectability constitutes the pres-ence of sensible presence, not as a pure virtuality, but as a being-in-itself-always-already-touched,[4] touched by the possibility of being touched. For this, it is necessary for being-passible in itself to have already offered some part of itself – but here, the part counts for the whole – to something outside of itself (or to some part of itself set apart from itself). Affect presupposes itself: in this, it behaves like a subject, but as the passive or passible actuality of a being-subject-*to*.

This originary act of passibility necessarily takes place as the cutting and opening of an access, the access through which it is possible for a sensing thing to sense something sensed, for a sensed thing to be sensed. Exteriority as intimacy of the aisthetic entelechy gives us the cut of the place: sensation is necessarily *local. A sensation without difference and without locality – a sensation without world – would not be a sensation* (and would not be 'a,' would not be this singular being that a sensation as 'a' sensation always is). Thus, the erotic body is zoned or it is not. (And this is why, inversely, perfect intellection is represented as total sensation, the solar or nocturnal immanence of a mystical 'spirit.') Not only is aisthesis the act of this intimate exteriority, but it is also immediately the plurality of the senses. There are different senses, *non-communicable* senses, not because of a partitioning in accordance with the rationality of diverse 'moments of the concept' (as Hegel wished to establish), but, rather, and as Hegel himself also says, because the sensible is 'synonymous with what is self-external.'[5]

The sensible or the aisthetic is the outside-of-itself through which and *as* which there is the relation to itself of a sense in general, or through which there is the *toward* of sense. But there is no sense 'in general,' nor is there a generic sense. There is sense only in local difference and differing division. In-sensible *différance* is sensible: it is the insensible in the completely sensible, infinitesimally sensible sense we give to the word when we speak, for example, of an 'insensible diminution of the light.' The five senses are not the fragments of a transcendent or immanent sense. They are the fragmentation or the fractality of the sense that is sense *only as fragment*.

Even if one affirms, with Aristotle, that there is no region of the sensible other than those by which our senses are affected, one will still not be able to produce the reality of a sensible Totality: the whole of the sensible owes its being only to its division, its dis-sent. But this is how it makes up the whole of this world here: nontotalizable totality and still without remainder – or at least without remainder that would not be in turn traced out along the surface of this world here. One should not even say that the 'sensible whole' is *partes extra partes*, if this risks giving the impression that it is a matter of parts of a unity. The exteriority of sensible things is all there is of sensible interiority. In the same way, the reciprocal exteriority of the arts is the only interiority of their order, and the internal affinities of this order, Charles Baudelaire's 'correspondences,' always have the paradoxical character of affinities by incompatibility. The arts communicate only through the impossibility of passing from one to the other. Each one is at the threshold of the others.[6]

This fractality of (the) sense(s), exposed in the very place of the truth of sense, would be what is at stake in art, henceforth and for a long time to come – and perhaps also for a long time since.

This is indeed why aesthetics and art appear in our history (I mean appear as irreducible places of thought that seem necessary to the determination or to the problematization *of* sense itself) when the intelligibility of sense, in its cosmocosmetology, vanishes. This is what happens between the eighteenth century and Hegel. And this is why, when Hegel announces that art 'is henceforth for us a thing of the past,' he is announcing nothing other than the end of the beautiful (re)presentation of intelligible Sense – that is, of what he also calls 'the religion of art' – and the sublation of this presentation in its modern mode of truth, the mode of the concept, philosophical 'gray,' the achieved immanence (without sensible difference) of a transcendence that has wholly come back to itself.

But at the same time, with exactly the same gesture, Hegel *delivers* art for itself: he delivers it from service to transcendence in immanence, and he delivers it to detached, fragmentary truth. Hegel, *volens nolens*, registers and salutes in fact *the birth of art*, the detachment of this 'concept' that will henceforth be autonomous, exposed as the very detachment, separation, and fragmentation of sense.[7] Without a doubt, for Hegel, 'the specific modes of the sensuous being of art are themselves a totality of necessary differences in art – the *particular arts*'; but this totality realizes itself only in maintaining its differentiation:

> What the particular arts realize in individual works of art is, according to the Concept of art, only the universal forms of the self-unfolding Idea of beauty. It is as the external actualization of this Idea that the wide Pantheon of art is rising. Its architect and builder is the self-comprehending spirit of beauty, but to complete it will need the history of the world in its development through thousands of years.[8]

Thus, the same Hegel who had presented the end of ancient religion[9] as the end of art in the death of the divine life that animated art (the 'death of the great Pan') here presents art itself as the temple of all the gods, the numerous gods who are no longer gods but art itself in all its scintillating fragments – and this temple is on the scale of the history of the world.

The multiplicity of the 'Pantheon' renders God absent, and art comes where God absents himself: a banal proposition, no doubt, but a proposition the implications of which remain still to be explored (so true is it that at the same time, and since Hegel, some have unfolded a 'secularized' theologicoaesthetics: some of Kazimir Malevitch's discourses, for example, are closer to Plotinus than they are to Malevitch's paintings, and it is not certain that any philosophy of art has yet sufficiently realized what is at stake in fragmentation; inversely, Plotinus is perhaps also closer to Malevitch's or Pablo Picasso's paintings than to Plotinian truth). The *sense* that can expose itself only along the edges of the fragment is not an *absent sense* that would be comparable to the absence – itself full of sense – of God, who, precisely as God, does not cease to absent himself: it is a sense the absence of which makes no sense, that is, does not convert itself into an absent presence but consists entirely, if one can say it this way, in absence as presentation, or in the fragmentation of pres-ence.

If one can say it this way, for precisely one cannot, and art is always the art *of not saying it, of exposing that which is not to be said* (not an unsayable, but the not-to-be-said of sense) *along the edges of all that is exposed*, as the sayable itself, and further, as saying itself, as all of saying in its fragmentation.[10]

There remains then – what remains in the self-deconstruction to which the Occident has stubbornly and rigorously applied itself, precisely by reason of (and in proportion to) that nonpresentation of its Self to which it was destined from the beginning (to which it was destined by its own demand for truth, which for this reason can always dialecticize itself into 'nihilism' as also into 'nihilist' art).

And what remains thus, or what is *coming* and does not stop coming as what remains, is what we call *existence*. It is 'the existence of being,' not in the sense of a predicate distinct from its essence, but in the sense of being that *is transitively* existence, or that *ex-ists*. Being exists the existent: it does not give the existent its sense *as* presupposition and end, but, rather, it is sense given with existence, as existence, more than a gift, being *toward* the world, where the world is not construed as a surrounding space, but as the multiple tracing out [*frayage*] of the singularity of existence. The world is multiple in regions and regimens of the existent, multiple in individuals and in events within each individual, but, first of all (and all the way to the end), it is multiple in materials, in material fragmentations of sense: sensible existence, fractal existence.

Fragment: no longer the piece fallen from a broken set, but the explosive splintering of that which is neither immanent nor transcendent. The in-finite explosion of the finite. Not the piece that has fallen, and even less the piece that has fallen into decay, but the piece that has *befallen*, that is to say, that has come by devolution. Devolution is attribution, division, destination, passing of contracts, transfer by unrolling (*devolvere*), unfolding, and disintrication. World, fragment: being devolved.

Fallen pieces, waste, wreckage, jagged bits, remains, inner organs of slaughtered beasts, shreds, filth, and excrement, on which contemporary art – *trash art* – gorges itself (and of which it disgorges itself), are all posited, deposited, and exposed on the infinitely thin limit that separates falling-into-decay from befalling, loss from scintillating fragmentation, and abandon from abandon itself. Art vacillates here between its own decay and a future coming of its devolution. Between its failure and its chance, art begins once again. It was not really so naïve of Marx, after all, to be astonished at the effect and affect produced by the works of the Ancients, now that the myths that supported them have fallen into disuse; he understood this effect as the effect of a perpetual childhood freshness.[11] Perhaps art is the *infans* par excellence, the one who, instead of discoursing, fragments instead: fraying [*frayage*] and fracture of the access.

Art has hitherto been considered, in all possible ways, in terms of both 'creation' (*poiesis*, genius, and so on) and 'reception' (judgment, critique, and so on). But what has been left in the shadows is its befalling or devolving, that is to say, also its chance, event, birth, or encounter – which, in other terminologies, has been called the 'shock,' 'touch,' 'emotion,' or 'pleasure,' and which participates indissociably in both 'creation' and 'reception.' Aesthetic pleasure (it is a pleonasm if one is indeed speaking of aisthetic pleasure, for 'all pleasure is physical';[12] the sensing/sensed entelechy is always also that of a sentiment of pleasure or of pain) is still that with respect to which the discourse on art remains most discreet, distant, or distracted. At least, this is the case for the modern discourse on art. The classical discourse focused on how *to give pleasure* at least as much as on rules: but the aesthetics of rules and how to give pleasure (rules *for* and *of* giving pleasure) gave way to the aesthetics of *poiesis* and works. Nonetheless, the classical discourse generally contented itself with designating the giving of pleasure – being charming, touching, or graceful – as the goal, and barely touched on it, so to speak, any further.

No doubt, discourse, qua discourse, cannot avoid distance or distraction, as far as pleasure is concerned. Signification can *touch* on neither senses nor sense. One could also put it this way: *jouiscience is impossible*.[13] For pleasure – mixed up with displeasure in Edmund Burke's and Kant's versions of the 'sublime,' as also in Freud's 'pleasure of tension,' which is a subliminal or preliminary pleasure, a pleasure at the limit that is perhaps the essence of pleasure and that is for Freud the aesthetic 'premium'[14] – pleasure does not take place except through *place*, touch, and zone. It is local, detached, discreet, fragmentary, absolute. A nonfractal pleasure, a pleasure without limits, fragmentation, arrival, or falling due, is not a pleasure at all: at most, it is satisfaction, approbation, contentment. Pleasure is not, for all that, 'partial': the structure here is not the structure of a *pars pro toto*, but that of a singular totality.

Art is a fragment because it borders on pleasure: it *gives* pleasure [*il* fait *plaisir*]. It is made both out of and for the pleasure it gives, the pleasure thanks to which it touches – and with a *touch* that comprises its essence. What art does is to *please*: and so it is neither a *poiesis* nor a *praxis*, but another kind of 'doing' altogether that mixes together with both of the other kinds an *aisthesis* and its double entelechy. By means of the touch of the senses, pleasure surprises and suspends the enchainment of signifying sense. Or, rather, what one calls in French the '*touche des sens*' (touch of the senses) consists precisely in this suspension and being-taken-by-surprise of signifying enchainment. A position similar to that of truth: the sensuous presentation of truth.[15]

Of the symbolic as singular

Coming [*jouir*] occurs – or opens up [*fraye*] an access – only when the signifying or symbolic order is suspended. When it is suspended by an interruption that produces no void of sense but, to the contrary, a fullness and indeed an overfullness: an 'absent sense' or the eruptive coming of the sense that is older than all signification, as it were its truth *as sense*. This is what theoretical language has sometimes thought to translate by speaking of the 'impossible.' And yet the 'impossibility' of *jouissance* is merely the impossibility of its 'sensible' (re)presentation, whereas from another point of view this 'impossibility' of *jouissance* is the most extreme, originary possibility of all (joyous or painful) coming into presence, and of the potential significations of the latter.[16]

Obviously, it is not a matter of substituting for the theoretical discourse of impossibility that other discourse, itself no less theoretical, which thinks one can call *jouissance* or pleasure (or suffering) 'natural.' It is a matter neither of the immanence of nature nor of the transcendence of an impossibility. It is a matter of the double topology of presence coming into sense and sense coming into presence. Presentation without presentness [*présentité*], or pres-ence, does not transcend any more than it immanates: it comes, it comes and goes, as an interruption of symbolic enchainments and of substantial continuities. Or more precisely, it comes and goes, as an interruption of symbolic enchainments qua concatenations that ensure, by means of signification, a communication of substances (substances that are thereby signified, supposed, and subjectified).

This interruption is fractal – and 'art' is what takes place wherever this interruption is opened [*frayée*]. Or, at least there is some art that is tied in one way or another to these openings [*frayages*]. This is why art is considered indissociable from erotic *jouissance*, and reciprocally (it is the *Art of Loving*), and also from the *jouissance* of power and glory and/or from the *jouissance* of the communal (k)not. And this is also why there exist what one calls the 'minor arts' (gastronomy, the arts of scent, clothing, gardening, and so on). Even more broadly, there is a trace or presumption of 'art' every time the dialectical complicity of immanence and transcendence, of being-in-oneself and ecstasy, is broken, diverted, or suspended. That is, there is 'art' every time a *sense* more 'originary' than any assignation of a 'Self' or 'Other' comes to touch us: sense itself, 'in a sense,' in its 'unique' and singular sense, insofar as it cannot but precede both itself and the being 'of which' it is the sense, cannot but precede being in being itself, in the entrancement of *praes-entia*.

This can take place in gestures, postures, the 'art of conversation,' social convention and ceremony, rejoicing, and mourning. It is not dissociable from *ethos* and *praxis* in general, nor is it dissociable from the exercise of discourse and signification. This does not mean that 'art' is everywhere without distinction: 'art' is merely that which takes as its theme and place the opening [*frayage*] of sense as such along sensuous surfaces, a 'presentation of presentation,' the motion and emotion of a coming.

> Semantic family of the fragment: anfractuosity, fringe, shipwreck, to break a path [*frayer*], fraction, breach, brick, blunder, to pulverize, splinter, to infringe, to chamfer, needy, refrain. The refrain suspends the course of the song: it interrupts the song, launches it – but launches it again for the sake of the return of the refrain. Art as refrain: a fragment always subtracted from the series of historical events, always more or less than history, and yet linking itself up with history. Since Lascaux, art has been the implicit refrain of humanity – explicit since the Greeks or Hegel. There is a history of art, but it is the history of that which does not stop erupting within or breaking in on history, of that which gives itself always to be finished there, always taken up again. Inasmuch as art has a history, it is a culture or cult of forms, taste, divine service, or monument of power. But inasmuch as it is this refrain – anfractuosity, shipwreck, breach – it is 'art,' the fragment, ever anew a mere fragment of 'itself.'

But there is more. In a paradoxical way, it is precisely when the symbolic order is interrupted that it arrives at its own essence. The *symbolon* is breakage as much as reunion: it is breaking-for-reunion. It has its truth in its being-divided. There is never one *symbolon* alone. Like the *singulus*, it exists only in the plural – and the *singuli* are always as many *symbola*.

Symbola are the potsherds of recognition, fragments of pottery broken in the promise of assistance and hospitality. The fragment carries the promise that its fractal line will not disappear into a gathered whole but, rather, will rediscover itself elsewhere, lip against lip of the other piece. The symbolic fragment affirms that its fracture *is still itself elsewhere*, otherwise.[17]

The supreme law of the symbolic is not the constitution of a consistent link and a continuous circulation. It lies further back, in a more withdrawn place, in that which gives the condition of possibility of a link or exchange, an interlacing, a communication in general, by means of message or touch, *mimesis* or *methexis*, and that which always involves, and cannot but involve, the sharing out [*partage*] of the secret of communicability itself (a *symbolon* was also a secret).

Thus it is, for example, that we share the secret of language as something more remote than language itself – but nowhere else than exposed on the flowering surface of language. Or again, for another example, the secret, doubtless inseparable from the preceding one, of the communicability that one would have to call 'pathic,' communicability by means of 'empathy,' 'sympathy,' 'pathetic,' a secret more remote than all determinate *pathos*, the secret of pathic ambivalence (or what I have called *curiosity*), the secret of its simultaneity of touching and touched. The *phatic* and *pathic* double secret, in itself double and one, unidehiscent: condition, gift, or pres-ence of all being-in-common, the condition sharing out the world. *The secret of the symbolic consists exactly in its sharing*. The latter is thus evidently nothing that could be shared, and it is each time the *obvious obviation* of all sharing, both its patent ob-jectivity and the ob-stacle of its transitive dis-location. The secret is the obvious obviation of fragmentation.

On the one hand, the symbolic is shared in that it is common and communicated to everyone before any 'communication' is established – in a secret communicability of all things in that they *are*, in the unprecedented fractal topography that makes up the noncohesive coherence of a world, of the absolutely empirical and absolutely transcendental *fact that there are* all things, this gift of all things, this coming of all things that have *between* them all of this coming itself, the *praesentia* of their being, of the being that is nothing but *theirs*, their being *toward* the world.

On the other hand, the symbolic is shared in that it is distributed, dispersed, disseminated into all the places – points, moments, subjects of truth – of its possible symbolization: thus, the symbolic is not (or does not consist) anywhere at any time. It is neither any part nor the nonexistence of the Whole, but the sharing that is the secret: an open secret, discovered, exposed as obvious on all sides and to all comers, like the dispersion of stars and worlds in the world, open secret of the openly offered – manifest existence without manifestation. The manifest of existence: nudity.

The fragment, or 'art,' is the symbolic itself in the place and instant of its interruption. It is the secret – pleasure and/or pain – that interrupts the symbolization of the symbolic and thereby delivers the (n)evermore-of-sense [*plus-de-sens*], the infinitely-(n)evermore-of-sense by means of which existence is related and exposed to itself. This relation does not close itself off into a circle of signification; it suspends all such circles, diffracts and renders fragile signified sense. It exposes sense as the secret of that which contains nothing hidden, no mysterious or mystical depth, as the secret of that which comprises nothing other than the multiple, discreet, discontinuous, heterogeneous, and singular touch of being itself.

Fragment: pleasure and pain in which being enjoys and suffers under existence. It is in this sense that art is a fragment: it is not the presentation of being, and thus it is not related to truth in the sense that philosophy would have liked. Whatever its various philosophical determinations may have been (mimesis, splendor, representation, unveiling, putting-to-work, poietization, and all of these at once), they have all left the following unperceived (which art doubtless cannot expose except in exposing itself all the way to the end): that being, before or beyond its truth, enjoys and suffers under existence. This enjoyment-and-suffering is the arrival into presence, presentation without presentness: this presentation does not possess a truth as does (the subject of) being. Rather, presentation itself *is* truth. But not truth on 'the subject of': it is truth that is – or exists – as act. If art is the presentation of presentation and not of being, it is in this sense that it has a relation to truth: as truth's sense in action. As truth touches and cannot but touch.

This act is not an operation and does not culminate in a work – if a work is the production of an essence, an accomplishment, even if the essence or accomplishment of an infinite hermeneutics, as a certain tradition on art likes to think.

Which comes down to saying that the art-fragment is not a sacrifice (one of the senses of *operatio*, from which the Germanic *Opfer* comes): it neither operates nor ensures the continuity and homogeneity of being by mediating or sublimating the fractality of dispersed existence. The fragment in this sense is the opposite of sacrifice because it is the opposite of the continuity of essence that it was the task of occidental sacrifice to ensure: a eucharist that gathers and incorporates the fragments of its grace.

Art is the presentation of presentation insofar as presentation – the eternally intact touch of being – cannot be sacrificed. (*Eternally* means 'in the instant,' the 'there' of the 'here,' 'sea intermingled with sun.') This is indeed why, moreover, the entire tradition has stumbled over the sacrifice *of the senses* that it required in the name of truth and the good, a sacrifice, however, that art has not ceased to refuse to grant the tradition, withdrawing this sacrifice from the tradition in virtue of the breaking [*frayage*] of a completely different path.

This is indeed why 'art' is also *ars* or *teknē*: which takes place whenever the essential and sacrificial – essentializing – operation that 'metaphysics' projectively supposed to be the operation of a *phusis* is not taking place. *Phusis* would be the power [*puissance*] that of itself raises up its essence and carries it off to safety beyond the deadly contingencies of its manifestation. More precisely, its manifestation is certainly essential to it, but even more essential to it, even more pre-supposed is the power to be and/or to produce of itself its own manifestation, and in so doing to complete itself, to finish itself infinitely, in a finish without remainder, and in a finish where the power – supraessentially – does not stop preceding as well as succeeding on the act. (And it is this characteristic of 'nature' that one has most frequently wanted to 'imitate.') But *teknē* is *phusis* without this essence: the *meta-physics* of the act that precedes (itself) in pres-ence, the act that completes itself of itself, but that, in so doing, completes nothing other than itself, closing neither the circle of a proper self nor the circle of a proper sense, but, rather, ceaselessly

opening the toward-itself as if onto the world. *Teknē* is that whose sense (or senses) is the sense (or are the senses) of an enjoyment and suffering rather than a completion and verification.

Teknē is fragmentary or fractal: the realm of essenceless existence. This realm lacks both domain and sovereignty. The power of technics may indeed go on and grow in an exponential manner. It does not produce the assumption of a sovereignty: it does not dispose over the instance of an End or a Sense. It is not astonishing, therefore, that the era of 'technics' is also the era of the 'end of art.' The latter, in fact, has finished serving the finish of an end. It has finished being religious or philosophical art, as it has finished being (theologico)political art. Thus, art is open to this fragmentation of sense that existence *is*. It was always open to this. But today, the yawning of this opening distends and even tears it from one end to the other: on the scale of an in-finity of sense that we expect to respond *for* us. Not, first of all, as an 'aesthetic' response but, rather, as an unprecedented art of being in the world, along the edgy surfaces of *aisthesis* and the intimate spacing of its double entelechy, a counterpoint without resolution.

Translated by Jeffrey S. Librett

Notes

1 Bataille, 'Le petit,' *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 3, p. 40. The Germans call a remote place 'the ass of the world' (*Arsch der Welt*).

2 One could say, for example, the event is not the execution of Louis XVI, but that the king becomes executable and the leader culpable.

3 I am keeping myself here in constant and problematic proximity to the stakes, or to the only stake, of the great modern philosophical statements on art, from Hegel (the sensible presentation of the Idea) passing by way of Nietzsche (the apotropaic access to the abyss of truth) to Heidegger (the *Dichtung* of truth).

4 Which would point to some, at least, of the analyses of affect that have been carried out by Nicolas Abraham, in particular to this definition: 'A lived experience, already act, but not yet an act of transcendence – the *affect*' (*L'écorce et le noyau*, 80).

5 *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, ed. and trans. M. J. Petry, vol. 2, *Anthropology*, Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1979, addition to sec. 401, 167.

6 Two remarks: (1) What is said here must be understood as applying to all that we call 'sensible,' starting beyond the mere 'sensorial' sphere, which is itself nothing but an already abstract division; it is a matter of the sensual and the sentimental, of affect and sense in all of their extensions. Finally, it is a matter of *sense* insofar as it would be: being touched by existing. (2) One can imagine the consequences to be drawn concerning the desire for a 'great art' as 'total art,' whether in the mode of a sublime synthesis from Kant to Wagner, or in the mode of a subsumption of all the arts beneath the art of 'poesy,' from Kant again and Hegel to Heidegger. I point here again to Lacoue-Labarthe's analyses concerning Wagner, Heidegger, and Mallarmé in *Musica ficta*.

7 This reading of the end of the 'religion of art' in Hegel's *Phenomenology* is carried out and justified in 'Portrait de l'art en jeune fille' (in Jean-Luc Nancy, *Le poids d'une pensée* [Montréal and Grenoble: Le Griffon d'Argile, 1991], and in *L'art moderne et la question du sacré*, ed. Jean-Jacques Nillès [Paris: Cerf, 1993]). It goes without saying that a finer investigation would have to show precisely how art has not ceased to be born since Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, even when the subsumption of art beneath the intelligible is the organizing theme. Art appears as soon as sense makes itself atheistic: but this is no doubt as old as Lascaux. Art is more 'primitive' than any schema of primitivity and progression, any schema of the advance of knowledge or the flight of the gods. And the same goes for the world.

8 Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, trans. T. M. Knox, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, p. 73, p. 90. To be precise, one must add that the side of the 'concept' can conquer for itself, in terms (and according to the general

economy) of the *Aesthetics*, neither its autonomy nor its interior unity: it remains as such deprived of sensible life, color, and taste. This is, in the final analysis, what is at stake in the impossible dialectical step from 'poetry' to 'thought,' as also in the nonsublatable contradiction within poetry itself, for poetry does not stop coming back to the sensible in the very moment when it is about to dissolve the sensible. The infamous 'end of art' is at the very least, to put it quickly, only half of Hegel's thought here. The other half is the 'vast Pantheon' of different arts, art as difference of presentation. And this itself belongs to the necessity of thought, for the latter 'in a relative sense is indeed abstract, but it must be concrete, not one-sided' (72). That concrete thought gives itself in a dialectical Christology does not prevent the latter from engendering 'Christian art,' which culminates, *never to finish*, in the intimate contradiction of poetry-thought (and/or poetry-prose), and consequently in the unachievable 'Pantheon.' I will show elsewhere how that can be read right off the page of Hegel's text.

9 In the text of the *Phenomenology*. This remarkable turn in Hegel escaped, in particular, Heidegger's notice, although the latter knew quite well that Hegel was not affirming the end of the production of art, but the end of the necessity of its presentation. But it is also this necessity that Hegel not only maintains but installs philosophically despite himself. By this very fact, Heidegger's interpretation of art finds itself at once in advance of and lagging behind Hegel's own account. A long analysis would be necessary, but I will note the principle of such an analysis briefly here: Heidegger's understanding of art is 'in advance of' Hegel, insofar as it is an understanding of art as 'opening of a world,' that is, of the set of 'relations' and their 'joints' where 'this being-open of the There is the essence of *truth*' (and my own approach owes much to this understanding: it is indeed a matter of a presentation of presentation or of coming). But Heidegger's understanding of art 'lags behind' Hegel's to the extent that the relationship to the 'earth' as 'depth and closedness of the abyss,' itself in a relationship to the divine that is implied by the paradigm of the 'temple,' seems to me to reenclose art within another sacredness that is also the same (to which is then added the assignation of the 'people'). It is not that one must object to Heidegger that the world is 'pure' opening: in a sense, this world here is indeed 'the earth.' But it is the earth-world, and without gods, if not without places altogether. (Cf. Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art,' in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter, New York: Harper & Row, 1975. [*Editor*: the essay is also included in this *Reader* unabridged.])

10 Or else it is the reverse: God absents himself when art arrives. And yet art is always arriving, ceaselessly renewed since Lascaux, whereas 'God' (sense knotted into the dialectics of transcendence and immanence) will have merely signaled the occidental trajectory. In this sense, the divine figures of ancient art have nothing to do with the divinity of God. Hegel is thus right to see art there, but he is wrong to see there a moment of religion, destined to pass into revealed religion, then into thought. However, the Christian-philosophical (or Judeo-Christian-philosophical and also Islamic) God is also not determined as a pure exteriority to the pagan 'divine,' no more than the latter, in its other aspect, is simply identical to 'art' (of which it has, in a sense, no concept). The mixture of these distinctions is, to the contrary, at the very origin of the Occident. This is indeed why the most extreme ambiguity of occidental art occurs in the superb effervescence of Christian art (the one that Hegel is silent about in the *Phenomenology* but celebrates, in the *Aesthetics*, with fascination, above all, in the form of painting). Christianity represents the undecidably aesthetic and theological exigency of a 'sensible presentation of the Idea.' The Idea incarnates itself here, but the incarnation dialecticizes itself, denies or sacrifices the fragmentation that the sensible is. The body of God may well be presented in a multitude of pieces of bread – this 'bread and wine' that will have haunted Hegel, Hölderlin, Mallarmé … – in the end it is his *corpus mysticum* that is consumed. On this account, art appears as a eucharist (the 'gift of a grace') that remains in broken fragments, that consists in their fragmentation. A eucharist without communion. A eucharist that would be the deconstruction of the eucharist. Still, if deconstruction must effectively set adrift the pieces of the assemblage and must dislocate it (fragment it) in order to break the path [*frayer la voie*] of another sense, then the disassembled 'art' of 'religion' can, no doubt, no more remain 'art' than 'religion.' The aestheticotheological has not finished causing us trouble.

11 Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 111: 'A man cannot become a child again or he becomes childish. But does he not find joy in the child's naïveté, and must he himself not strive to reproduce its truth at a higher stage?' Do this native truth of art and this return of sense-being-born have to do also with 'emancipated labor'?

12 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987, sec. 29, 'General Comment on the Exposition of Aesthetic Reflective Judgments,' p. 139. Kant picks up this point again with respect to Epicurus. Cf. sec. 54.

13 This is the reason why, when one speaks of such matters, the chances are that a poem rather than expository prose will be the result. Thus, to take an arbitrary example, Michel Butor writes (in 1973) about Pierre Alechinsky: 'His soluble gaze surrounded / by the turban of exquisite odors / with the noise of his studio / and kisses on the windows' (*Pierre Alechinsky: Extraits pour traits*, ed. Michel Sicard, Paris: Galilée, 1989, p. 105). Still, it is too simple to deny *jouiscience*. Signification and discourse do not occur without pleasure or pain. But this is not my object here.

14 [Nancy examines this Freudian notion as it develops in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* and in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* in 'In Statu Nascendi,' in *The Birth to Presence*, trans. Brian Holmes *et al.*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993, pp. 211–33. Trans.]

15 Which does not mean that pleasure and art are distributed simply in accordance with the five senses of an abstract sensoriality. Sensuality fragments otherwise, up to a certain point. But it fragments nonetheless.

16 In order to follow the – obvious – thread of *jouissance* here, one would have to reread Jacques Derrida's 'Pas I,' *Gramma*, 1976, vols 3–4, pp. 111–215, a text dedicated to coming and to the command 'Come' as its structure or law.

17 The things one throws into the urn, the suffrage of the citizens, belong also to the family of the fragment. *Suffrage* is a portmanteau word made of 'symbol' and 'fragment' …

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Jean-Luc Nancy in English

The Title of the Letter: A Reading of Lacan (with P. Lacoue-Labarthe; 1973), trans. F. Raffoul and D. Pettigrew, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

The Speculative Remark (One of Hegel's Bon Mots) (1973), trans. C. Suprenant, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.

The Discourse of the Syncope: Logodaedalus (1976), trans. S. Anton, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.

The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism (with P. Lacoue-Labarthe; 1978), trans. P. Barnard and C. Lester, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988.

Retreating the Political (with P. Lacoue-Labarthe; 1979–83), ed. S. Sparks, London: Routledge, 1997.

The Inoperative Community (1983), ed. P. Connor, trans. S. Sawhney, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

The Experience of Freedom (1988), trans. B. McDonald, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

The Gravity of Thought (1990), trans. F. Raffoul and G. Recco, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1997.

A Finite Thinking (1990), trans. S. Sparks, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Corpus (1992), trans. R.A. Rand, New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.

The Sense of the World (1993), trans. J.S. Librett, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

The Birth to Presence, trans. B. Holmes *et al.*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

The Muses (1994), trans. P. Kamuf, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.

Being Singular Plural (1996), trans. R.D. Richardson and A.E. O'Byrne, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative (1997), trans. J. Smith and S. Miller, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

The Creation of the World or Globalization (2002), trans. R. François and D. Pettigrew, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007.

Listening (2002), trans. C. Mandell, New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.
The Ground of the Image (2003), trans. J. Fort, New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.
Noli Me Tangere: On the Raising of the Body (2003), trans. S. Clift, P.-A. Brault, and M. Naas, New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.
Multiple Arts: The Muses II, ed. S. Sparks, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.
Philosophical Chronicles (2004), trans. F. Manjali, New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.
Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity (2005), trans. B. Bergo, G. Malenfant, and M.B. Smith, New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.
On the Commerce of Thinking: Of Books and Bookstores (2005), trans. D. Willis, New York: Fordham University Press, 2009.
The Fall of Sleep (2007), trans. C. Mandell, New York: Fordham University Press, 2009.
The Truth of Democracy (2008), trans. M. Naas, New York: Fordham University Press, 2010.

Further reading

James (2006) offers a book-length introduction to Jean-Luc Nancy, while Kamuf (1992), and Michaelsen and Johnson (2002) edit special journal issues devoted to his thought. Nancy's concept of community is examined by Armstrong (2009), Domanov (2006), Levett (2005), Norris (2000), and Ojakangas (2005), and his ontology is assessed by James (2002) and Watkin (2009). Hoolsema (2004), Hutchens (2005), and Sheppard *et al.* (1997) consider the implications of his ideas for philosophy. For studies of Nancy's aesthetics, see Kaplan (2001), Ross (2007), and Sorial (2004), as well as Derrida's (2005) reading of touch.

P. Armstrong, *Reticulations: Jean-Luc Nancy and the Networks of the Political*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
J. Derrida, *On Touching: Jean-Luc Nancy*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.
O. Domanov, 'Jean-Luc Nancy: an attempt to reduce community to ontology', *Critical Studies*, 2006, vol. 28, pp. 111–26.
D. Hoolsema, 'Manfred Frank, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, and Jean-Luc Nancy: prolegemena to a French-German dialogue', *Critical Horizons*, 2004, vol. 5, pp. 137–64.
B.C. Hutchens, *Jean-Luc Nancy and the Future of Philosophy*, Durham: Acumen, 2005.
I. James, 'The persistence of the subject: Jean-Luc Nancy', *Paragraph*, 2002, vol. 25, pp. 125–41.
———, *The Fragmentary Demand: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.
P. Kamuf (ed.), *On the Work of Jean-Luc Nancy: A Special Issue of Paragraph* (vol. 15), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992.
L. Kaplan, 'Photography and the exposure of community: sharing Nan Goldin and Jean-Luc Nancy', *Angelaki*, 2001, vol. 6, pp. 7–30.
N. Levett, 'Taking exception to community (between Jean-Luc Nancy and Carl Schmitt)', *Journal for Cultural Research*, 2005, vol. 9, pp. 421–36.
S. Michaelsen and D. Johnson (eds), *At the Heart: Of Jean-Luc Nancy. A Special Issue of The New Centennial Review*, 2002, vol. 2, no. 3, Fall.
A. Norris, 'Jean-Luc Nancy and the myth of the common', *Constellations*, 2000, vol. 7, pp. 272–95.
M. Ojakangas, 'Philosophies of "concrete" life: from Carl Schmitt to Jean-Luc Nancy', *Telos*, 2005, vol. 132, pp. 25–45.
A. Ross, *The Aesthetic Paths of Philosophy: Presentation in Kant, Heidegger, Lacoue-Labarthe, and Nancy*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
D. Sheppard, S. Sparks, and C. Thomas (eds), *On Jean-Luc Nancy: The Sense of Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 1997.
S. Sorial, 'Heidegger, Jean-Luc Nancy, and the question of Dasein's embodiment: an ethics of touch and spacing', *Philosophy Today*, 2004, vol. 48, pp. 216–30.
C. Watkin, *Phenomenology or Deconstruction? The Question of Ontology in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur and Jean-Luc Nancy*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.

Chapter 38

GIORGIO AGAMBEN

INTRODUCTION

The range of interests of this Italian philosopher is extensive. Giorgio Agamben (b. 1942) works on Biblical textual criticism, medieval literature, holocaust literature, poetics, aesthetics, and political philosophy. The spectrum of his writing extends from the philosophy of language and literature, in works such as *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture* (1977) and *The Idea of Prose* (1985), to biopolitics, in books including *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1995) and *State of Exception* (2005). But the two subject areas are not separate; it is not as if Agamben were moving from one specialism to another. Rather, both language and biopolitics are confronted by him as regions in which operations of inclusion and exclusion are at work, and it is the presuppositions which allow these operations to function that he seeks to draw out. Their overlapping concerns are perhaps most forcefully displayed in his exploration of the nature of the Nazi concentration camps in *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (1998). Against the Nazi conviction that the camps were 'unsayable' because any description of their atrocities by survivors would not be believed, Agamben declares that it is possible to bear witness to the camps, it is possible to 'speak Auschwitz'. This is because speaking is a human capacity, and occurs in its fullest form when it speaks of those who have the incapacity to speak, of those who have been excluded from the category 'human' and have been reduced to 'bare life'.

The idea that language necessarily includes the unsayable is a central concern of Agamben's philosophy of language. Language, he finds, is structured by presuppositions. In his 1985 essay 'Tradition of the Immemorial', he observes that Aristotle's canonical definition of the statement – a 'saying something about something' – requires that the something which is being talked about, the second something, is already known, has already been spoken about.[1] Thus, Aristotle's definition of a statement can only explain what it means to utter a statement by presupposing that statements are already underway. Similarly, in his essay on Derrida from 1990 ('"*Pardes*": The Writing of Potentiality'),[2] he observes that it is not possible for one word to signify another word, without the latter losing its status as a word and becoming an object; by referring to a word, such as the word 'horse', it stops being a word in use, a signifier, and becomes a referent, a signified. As Heller-Roazen makes the point, language can never be said for Agamben because 'what is at issue in it – the making manifest of something in language – is always presupposed in everything said'.[3] In sharp contrast with poststructuralism's commitment to remaining *within language*, Agamben asserts that language *can* speak *about things* where, in each case, 'the thing itself is not a thing… [but rather] the very sayability, the very openness at issue in language, which, in language, we always presuppose and forget, perhaps because it is at bottom its own oblivion and abandonment'.[4]

His ambition with regard to the presuppositional structure of language is to say the unsayable. As he writes in 'The Thing Itself' from 1984: '*the task of philosophical presentation is to come*

with speech to help speech, so that, in speech, speech itself does not remain presupposed but instead comes to speech'.[5] To do this, he focuses on the element of capacity within the notion of 'say*ability*'. The thing which is sayable in language, as we have just seen, exists not as a thing, but rather as an openness, something which *can be done*, a potentiality. He draws inspiration from Aristotle writing on the senses in *De Anima*. In response to the question of why there is no sensation of the senses themselves, Aristotle suggests that this is because 'sensibility is not actual but only potential'.[6] By analogy, Aristotle continues, 'the combustible does not burn by itself, without a principle of combustion; otherwise it would burn itself and would not need any actual fire'.[7] What this tells us about potentiality, Agamben argues, is that it is the state of having privation. If the senses could sense themselves, then they would fill themselves, and would not be openings onto the world. Thus, the senses exist as an appetite, a hunger. So potentiality means 'to be one's own lack, *to be in relation to one's own incapacity*'; in short, to be in relation to one's own impotentiality.[8] On this understanding, the saying of the unsayable becomes the recognition that the potential to speak includes its own lack, the potential to say nothing. But, as we saw with the senses, this stands not as an option, a licence for silence, but as a hunger which must be satisfied through being actualized, through speaking.

Structures of inclusion, exclusion, and presupposition are also active in Agamben's work on biopolitics. His ambition is to show how 'life' exists as a politically determined category within Western modernity. The term 'biopolitics' is coined by Michel Foucault. It is introduced in the last chapter of the first volume of his *History of Sexuality* (1976),[9] and is used again in a lecture course he gave at the Collège de France in Paris in 1978–79, titled *Birth of Biopolitics*.[10] Despite the title, little attention is given in the course to biopolitics, and the focus is more on neo-liberal forms of governmental reason. As Patton explains, Foucault justifies his shift in topic by asserting that it is the liberal acts of government which constitute the framework within which biopolitics operates.[11] Biopolitics emerges in the eighteenth century, Foucault argues, when the state becomes preoccupied with the problems created 'by phenomena proper to a collection of living beings constituted as a population: health, hygiene, natality, longevity, race'.[12] Agamben though is critical of Foucault's positioning biopolitics as something which applies only to governmental or institutional practices within modernity. In contrast, he argues that it has its origins in the way life is understood and incorporated within the political sphere in the West, and urges a return to ontology as a way of identifying the modes through which such understanding and incorporation take place.

A central part of Agamben's ontological project is the concept of 'bare life'. It is life that has been stripped of all political significance and which exists solely for the purposes of being subject to the calculations and administrations of state power. In introducing the term, Agamben is not aligning himself with Hannah Arendt and reaffirming Aristotle's distinction between *zoē* and *bios*: simple, natural, or private life on the one hand, and the political sphere of speech and action in which social structures are created and sustained on the other. In other words, bare life is not *zoē*. Rather, 'bare life' is the concept which is responsible for the thought (or thinkability) of a kind of life *distinct from the political*. It is the concept which allows distinctions between politicized and depoliticized life, such as between *zoē* and *bios*, to be formed in the first place, a 'zone of indistinction' prior to a distinction.[13] In his selective genealogy of the concept from antiquity to modernity, Agamben shows how bare life constitutes Western biopolitics through a double relation of inclusion and exclusion: (1) accounts of the *polis include* it by defining it as the very thing which is other than or *excluded from* the *polis*, and (2) the creation within societies of a category or group (thus they are included) which can be violated without the act of violation counting as a crime, since this category or group is only bare life (thus they are excluded). *Homo sacer* is the first category of this kind historically: the notion from ancient Roman law of a person who cannot be sacrificed, because they are unworthy of the legal or moral status which sacrifice confers, yet who can be killed by anyone without punishment

precisely because they are deemed to have no legal or moral status. This means there is always a state or condition of presupposition between law and life.[14] In order for law to exist as law, it has to presuppose the existence of something outside of it, yet this outside is an inside since it is the presupposition which enables the articulation of the law.

Agamben's central themes of language and the human are present in his chapter in this volume, 'The Melancholy Angel'. With language, it is the means by which history and tradition are transmitted, how the past is described and understood for the future, that is at issue. With the human, it is the problem of how the past can speak to the future at a time when tradition, which would ordinarily ensure continuity between the old and the new, has been interrupted. The starting point for Agamben's analysis is Walter Benjamin's thesis, from 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', that art is losing its aura due to works being torn from their particular tradition and context and being reproduced *ad infinitum* mechanically. Whereas art of the past transmitted tradition in virtue of being immersed in the 'system of beliefs and notions that has found expression in it', art in its modern, mechanical form, as an isolatable and reproducible object, becomes something removed from the transmission of tradition, becomes the 'very destruction of transmissability'. The danger is that the human, wedged in the gap between past and future, is 'deprived of reference points' and presented with a future 'that does not throw any light on his struggle with the past'. Taking his cue from Benjamin's reference to the 'angel of history' in Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus*, Agamben introduces images and motifs from Dürer and Kafka in order to construct a series of lines and movements through which the role of art in both fracturing and reinstating man's relationship with tradition is plotted. In Benjamin's interpretation of Klee's painting, human being's break with tradition is displayed as the 'angel of history' looking out from the painting, facing the past, but with his wings caught in a storm, so that he is 'irresistibly propelled' (Benjamin's phrase) backwards into the future. To portray art's standpoint in this situation, Agamben turns to what he identifies as the 'angel of art' in Dürer's engraving *Melancholia*. This angel, he writes, appears as if frozen in 'an atemporal dimension': the storm has subsided, and the angel is looking down at 'the utensils of active life and other objects scattered' beneath it which, deprived of their daily function and place, have now 'become charged with a potential for alienation that transforms them into the cipher for something endlessly elusive'.

It is the angel of art that is the melancholic angel in the chapter title, his melancholia, Agamben writes, stemming from the realization that 'he has adopted alienation as his world', that he can possess reality 'only by making it unreal'. If art, Agamben suggests, 'is the place in which the old and the new have to resolve their conflict', then the loss of art's aura is not just a problem for art but is in fact a question of the survival of culture. The interruption in tradition, and the consequent loss of any cultural or historical determination, would seem to bring humanity to the verge of 'bare life', although he does not use the phrase in the chapter. In response, Agamben draws on his interest in the capacity of language (or representation in this case) to speak about its own capacity, to speak about its openness to things. The only way in which the transmission of tradition can resume, and human being can reappropriate his historical space as a space for future action, he argues, is if art heeds Kafka's question and becomes 'the transmission of the act of transmission', that is to say, if it surrenders truth as the representation of the world, and becomes instead the representation of representation.

Notes

1 G. Agamben, 'Tradition of the immemorial', in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ed. and trans. D. Heller-Roazen, pp. 104–15; p. 107. Aristotle's definition of a statement can be found in *De Anima*, 430b 26.

2 G. Agamben, '"*Pardes*": the writing of potentiality', in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, pp. 205–19.

3 D. Heller-Roazen, 'Editor's introduction: "To read what was never written"', in G. Agamben, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, pp. 1–23; p. 5.
4 G. Agamben, 'The thing itself', in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, pp. 27–38; p. 35.
5 Ibid., p. 35; original emphasis.
6 Quoted in Agamben, 'On potentiality', in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, pp. 177–84; p. 178. The quotation is from Aristotle, *De Anima*, 417a 4–5.
7 Quoted in Agamben, 'On potentiality', p. 178. The quotation is from Aristotle, *De Anima*, 417a 4–5.
8 Agamben, 'On potentiality', p. 182.
9 M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley, London: Allen Lane, 1979.
10 The *Birth of Biopolitics* lecture course is available in M. Foucault, *Résumé des Cours, 1970–1982*, Paris: Julliard, 1989.
11 P. Patton, 'Foucault and Agamben on biopower and bipolitics', in M. Calarco and S. DeCaroli (eds), *Giorgio Agamben: Sovereignty and Life*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007, pp. 203–18; p. 207.
12 Foucault, *Résumé des Cours, 1970–1982*, p. 109; my translation.
13 G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. D. Heller-Roazen, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, p. 109.
14 J. Whyte, 'Its silent working was a delusion', in J. Clemens, N. Heron, and A. Murray (eds), *Giorgio Agamben: Law, Literature, Life*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008, pp. 66–81; p. 69.

■ ■ ■

THE MELANCHOLY ANGEL

GIORGIO AGAMBEN

'The quotations in my works are like robbers lying in ambush on the highway to attack the passerby with weapons drawn and rob him of his conviction.'[1] Walter Benjamin, the author of this statement, was perhaps the first European intellectual to recognize the fundamental change that had taken place in the transmissibility of culture and in the new relation to the past that constituted the inevitable consequence of this change. The particular power of quotations arises, according to Benjamin, not from their ability to transmit that past and allow the reader to relive it but, on the contrary, from their capacity to 'make a clean sweep, to expel from the context, to destroy.'[2] Alienating by force a fragment of the past from its historical context, the quotation at once makes it lose its character of authentic testimony and invests it with an alienating power that constitutes its unmistakable aggressive force.[3] Benjamin, who for his entire life pursued the idea of writing a work made up exclusively of quotations, had understood that the authority invoked by the quotation is founded precisely on the destruction of the authority that is attributed to a certain text by its situation in the history of culture. Its truth content is a function of the uniqueness of its appearance, alienated from its living context in what Benjamin, in his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History,' defines as 'une citation à l'ordre du jour' ('a quotation on the order of the day') on the day of the Last Judgment. The past can only be fixed in the image that appears once and for all in the instant of its alienation, just as a memory appears suddenly, as in a flash, in a moment of danger.[4]

This particular way of entering into a relation with the past also constitutes the foundation of the activity of a figure with which Benjamin felt an instinctive affinity: that of the collector. The collector also 'quotes' the object outside its context and in this way destroys the order inside which it finds its value and meaning. Whether it is a work of art or any simple commodity that he, with an arbitrary gesture, elevates to the object of his passion, the collector takes on the task of transfiguring things, suddenly depriving them both of their use value and of the ethical-social significance with which tradition had endowed them.

The collector frees things from the 'slavery of usefulness' in the name of their authenticity, which alone legitimates their inclusion in the collection; yet this authenticity presupposes in turn the alienation through which this act of freeing was able to take place, by which the value for the connoisseur took the place of the use value. In other words, the authenticity of the object measures its alienation value, and this is in turn the only space in which the collection can sustain itself.[5]

Precisely because he makes alienation from the past into a value, the figure of the collector is in some way related to that of the revolutionary, for whom the new can appear only through the destruction of the old. And it is certainly not an accident that the great collector figures flourish precisely in times of break from tradition and exaltation of renewal: in a traditional society neither the quotation nor the collection is conceivable, since it is not possible to break at any point the links of the chain of tradition by which the transmission of the past takes place.

It is peculiar that although Benjamin had observed the phenomenon through which the authority and the traditional value of the work of art had begun to become unsteady, he nonetheless did not notice that the 'decline of the aura,' as he sums up this process, did not in any way effect the 'freeing of the object from its cultural sheath' and the subsequent founding of the object on political praxis, but rather caused the reconstitution of a new 'aura.' Through this new aura, the object, re-creating and exalting to the utmost its authenticity on another level, became charged with a new value perfectly analogous to that alienation value that we have already observed with regard to the collection. Far from freeing the object from its authenticity, its technical reproducibility (which Benjamin identified as the main corrosive agent of the traditional authority of the work of art) carries authenticity to extremes: technical reproducibility is the moment when authenticity, by way of the multiplication of the original, becomes the very cipher of elusiveness.

This is to say: the work of art loses the authority and the guarantees it derived from belonging to a tradition for which it built the places and objects that incessantly weld past and present together. However, far from giving up its authenticity in order to become reproducible (thus fulfilling Hölderlin's wish that poetry might again become something that one could calculate and teach), the work of art instead becomes the locus of the most ineffable of mysteries, the epiphany of aesthetic beauty.

This phenomenon is particularly evident in Baudelaire, even though Benjamin considered him the poet in whom the decay of aura found its most typical expression. Baudelaire was the poet who had to face the dissolution of the authority of tradition in the new industrial society and therefore had to invent a new authority. He fulfilled this task by making the very intransmissibility of culture a new value and putting the experience of shock at the center of his artistic labor. The shock is the jolt power acquired by things when they lose their transmissibility and their comprehensibility within a given cultural order. Baudelaire understood that for art to survive the ruin of tradition, the artist had to attempt to reproduce in his work that very destruction of transmissibility that was at the origin of the experience of shock: in this way he would succeed in turning the work into the very vehicle of the intransmissible. Through the theorization of the beautiful as instantaneous and elusive epiphany (*un éclair … puis lu nuit!* ['a flash … then night!']), Baudelaire made of aesthetic beauty the cipher of the impossibility of transmission. We are now able to state more precisely what constitutes the alienation value that we have seen to be at the basis both of the quotation and of the activity of the collector, the alienation value whose production has become the specific task of the modern artist: it is nothing other than the destruction of the transmissibility of culture.

The reproduction of the dissolution of transmissibility in the experience of shock becomes, then, the last possible source of meaning and value for things themselves, and art becomes the last tie connecting man to his past. The survival of the past in the imponderable instant of aesthetic

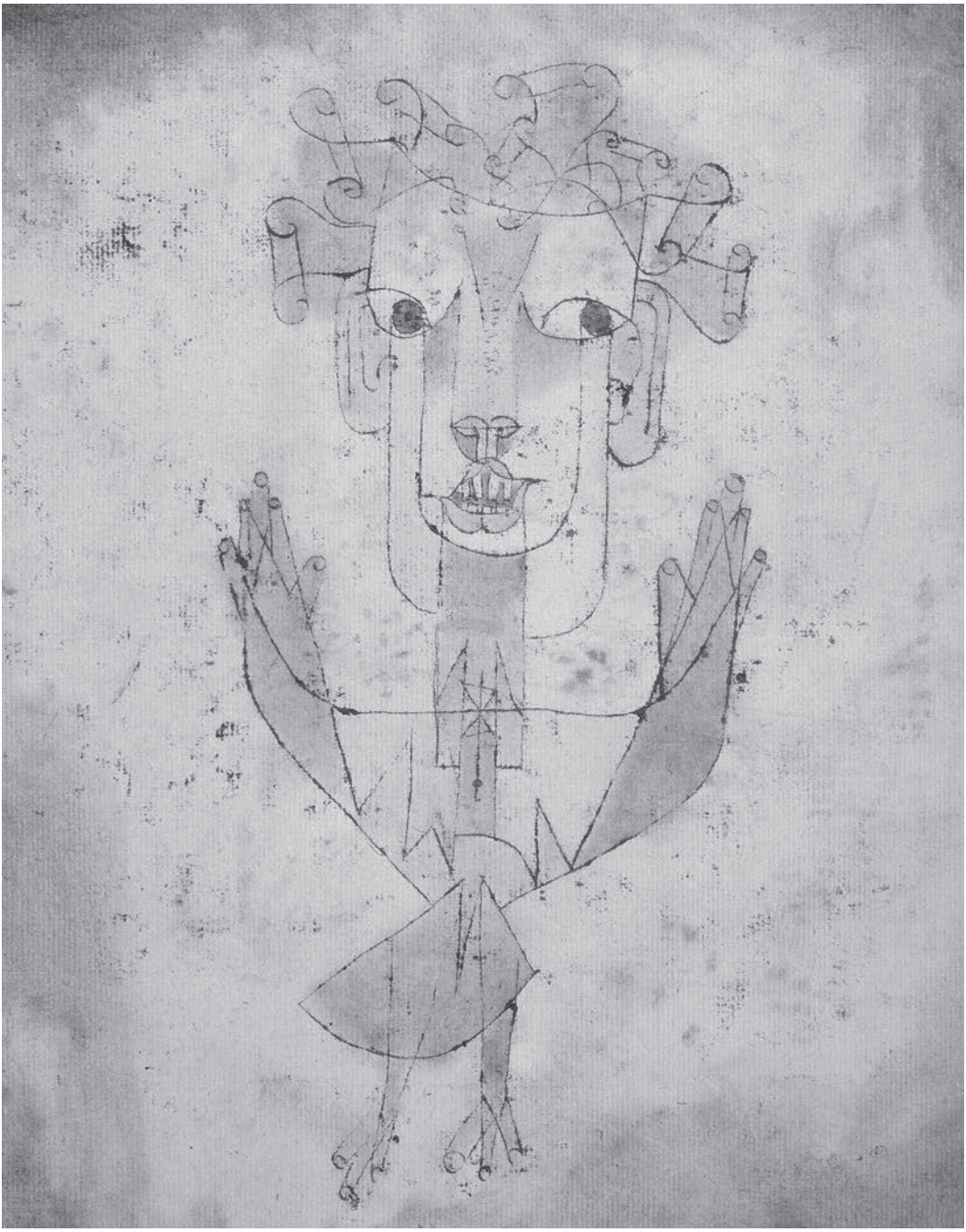
epiphany is, in the final analysis, the alienation effected by the work of art, and this alienation is in its turn nothing other than the measure of the destruction of its transmissibility, that is, of tradition.

In a traditional system, culture exists only in the act of its transmission, that is, in the living act of its tradition. There is no discontinuity between past and present, between old and new, because every object transmits at every moment, without residue, the system of beliefs and notions that has found expression in it. To be more precise, in a system of this type it is not possible to speak of a culture independently of its transmission, because there is no accumulated treasure of ideas and precepts that constitute the separate object of transmission and whose reality is in itself a value. In a mythical-traditional system, an absolute identity exists between the act of transmission and the thing transmitted, in the sense that there is no other ethical, religious, or aesthetic value outside the act itself of transmission.

An inadequation, a gap between the act of transmission and the thing to be transmitted, and a valuing of the latter independently of the former appear only when tradition loses its vital force, and constitute the foundation of a characteristic phenomenon of non-traditional societies: the accumulation of culture. For, contrary to what one might think at first sight, the breaking of tradition does not at all mean the loss or devaluation of the past: it is, rather, likely that only now the past can reveal itself with a weight and an influence it never had before. Loss of tradition means that the past has lost its transmissibility, and so long as no new way has been found to enter into a relation with it, it can only be the object of accumulation from now on. In this situation, then, man keeps his cultural heritage in its totality, and in fact the value of this heritage multiplies vertiginously. However, he loses the possibility of drawing from this heritage the criterion of his actions and his welfare and thus the only concrete place in which he is able, by asking about his origins and his destiny, to found the present as the relationship between past and future. For it is the transmissibility of culture that, by endowing culture with an immediately perceptible meaning and value, allows man to move freely toward the future without being hindered by the burden of the past. But when a culture loses its means of transmission, man is deprived of reference points and finds himself wedged between, on the one hand, a past that incessantly accumulates behind him and oppresses him with the multiplicity of its now-indecipherable contents, and on the other hand a future that he does not yet possess and that does not throw any light on his struggle with the past. The interruption of tradition, which is for us now a *fait accompli*, opens an era in which no link is possible between old and new, if not the infinite accumulation of the old in a sort of monstrous archive or the alienation effected by the very means that is supposed to help with the transmission of the old. Like the castle in Kafka's novel, which burdens the village with the obscurity of its decrees and the multiplicity of its offices, the accumulated culture has lost its living meaning and hangs over man like a threat in which he can in no way recognize himself. Suspended in the void between old and new, past and future, man is projected into time as into something alien that incessantly eludes him and still drags him forward, but without allowing him to find his ground in it.

In the 'Theses on the Philosophy of History,' Benjamin employs a particularly felicitous image to describe this situation of the man who has lost his link with his past and is no longer able to find himself in history:

> A Klee painting named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like



Paul Klee, *Angelus Novus*, 1920. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem. © DACS 2010

Albrecht Dürer, *Melancholia*, 1514 . © The Trustees of the British Museum

> to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.[6]

There is a well-known engraving by Dürer that presents some analogies with Benjamin's interpretation of Klee's painting. It represents a winged creature in a sitting position, in the act of meditating while looking ahead with an absorbed expression. Next to it, abandoned, the utensils of active life lie on the ground: a grindstone, a plane, nails, a hammer, a framing square, a pair of pincers, and a saw. The beautiful face of the angel is in the shadow; the light is reflected only by his long robe and a sphere set in front of his feet. Behind him we see an hourglass (the sand is flowing), a bell, a set of scales, and a magic square, and then, over the sea in the background, a comet shining without any brightness. A twilight atmosphere is diffused over the entire scene; it deprives every detail of materiality.

If Klee's *Angelus Novus* is the angel of history, nothing could represent the angel of art better than the winged creature in Dürer's engraving. While the angel of history looks toward the past, yet cannot stop his incessant flight backward toward the future, so the melancholy angel in Dürer's engraving gazes unmovingly ahead. The storm of progress that has gotten caught in that angel's wings has subsided here, and the angel of art appears immersed in an atemporal dimension, as though something, interrupting the continuum of history, had frozen the surrounding reality in a kind of messianic arrest. However, just as the events of the past appear to the angel of history as a pile of indecipherable ruins, so the utensils of active life and the other objects scattered around the melancholy angel have lost the significance that their daily usefulness endowed them with and have become charged with a potential for alienation that transforms them into the cipher for something endlessly elusive. The past that the angel of history is no longer able to comprehend reconstitutes its form in front of the angel of art; but this form is the alienated image in which the past finds its truth again only on condition of negating it, and knowledge of the new is possible only in the nontruth of the old. The redemption that the angel of art offers to the past, summoning it to appear outside its real context on the day of aesthetic Last Judgment, is, then, nothing other than its death (or rather, its inability to die) in the museum of aesthetics. And the angel's melancholy is the consciousness that he has adopted alienation as his world; it is the nostalgia of a reality that he can possess only by making it unreal.[7]

Aesthetics, then, in a way performs the same task that tradition performed before its interruption: knotting up again the broken thread in the plot of the past, it resolves the conflict between old and new without whose settlement man, this being that has lost himself in time and must find himself again, and for whom therefore at every instant his past and future are at stake, is unable to live. By destroying the transmissibility of the past, aesthetics recuperates it negatively and makes intransmissibility a value in itself in the image of aesthetic beauty, in this way opening for man a space between past and future in which he can found his action and his knowledge.

This space is the aesthetic space, but what is transmitted in it is precisely the impossibility of transmission, and its truth is the negation of the truth of its contents. A culture that in losing its transmissibility has lost the sole guarantee of its truth and become threatened by the incessant accumulation of its nonsense now relies on art for its guarantee; art is thus forced to guarantee something that can only be guaranteed if art itself loses its guarantees in turn. The humble activity of the τεχνίτης who, by opening for man the space of work, built the places and objects in which tradition accomplished its incessant process of welding past to present, now leaves its place to the creative activity of the genius who is burdened with the imperative to produce beauty. In this sense one can say that on the one hand, kitsch, which considers beauty as the immediate goal of the work of art, is the specific product of aesthetics, while on the other hand, the ghost of beauty that kitsch evokes in the work of art is nothing but the destruction of the transmissibility of culture, in which aesthetics is founded.

If the work of art is the place in which the old and the new have to resolve their conflict in the present space of truth, the problem of the work of art and of its destiny in our time is not simply a problem among the others that trouble our culture: not because art occupies an elevated station in the (disintegrating) hierarchy of cultural values, but because what is at stake here is the very survival of culture, a culture split by a past and present conflict that has found its extreme and precarious settlement in our society in the form of aesthetic alienation. Only the work of art ensures a phantasmagoric survival for the accumulated culture, just as only the indefatigable demystifying action of the land surveyor K. ensures for Count West-West's castle the sole appearance of reality it can lay claim to. But the castle of culture has now become a museum in which, on the one hand, the wealth of the past, in which man can in no way recognize himself, is accumulated to be offered to the aesthetic enjoyment of the members of the community, and, on the other, this enjoyment is possible only through the alienation that deprives it of its immediate meaning and of its poietic capacity to open its space to man's action and knowledge.

Thus aesthetics is not simply the privileged dimension that progress in the sensibility of Western man has reserved for the work of art as his most proper place; it is, rather, the very destiny of art in the era in which, with tradition now severed, man is no longer able to find, between past and future, the space of the present, and gets lost in the linear time of history. The angel of history, whose wings became caught in the storm of progress, and the angel of aesthetics, who stares in an atemporal dimension at the ruins of the past, are inseparable. And so long as man has not found another way to settle individually and collectively the conflict between old and new, thus appropriating his historicity, a surpassing of aesthetics that would not be limited to exaggerating the split that traverses it appears unlikely.

There is a note in Kafka's notebooks in which this inability of man to recover his space in the tension between past and future history is expressed with particular precision in the image of

> … travelers in a train that has met with an accident in a tunnel, and this at a place where the light of the beginning can no longer be seen, and the light of the end is so very small a glimmer that the gaze must continually search for it and is always losing it again, and, furthermore, it is not even certain whether it is the beginning or the end of the tunnel.[8]

At the time of Greek tragedy, when the traditional mythic system had begun to decline under the impulse of the new moral world that was being born, art had already assumed the task of settling the conflict between old and new, and had responded to this task with the figure of the guilty innocent, of the tragic hero who expresses in all his greatness and misery the precarious significance of human action in the interval between what is no longer and what is not yet.

Kafka is the author of our time who has most coherently assumed this task. Faced with man's inability to appropriate his own historical presuppositions, he tried to turn this impossibility into the very soil on which man might recover himself. In order to realize this project, Kafka reversed Benjamin's image of the angel of history: the angel has already arrived in Paradise – in fact he was there from the start, and the storm and his subsequent flight along the linear time of progress are nothing but an illusion he creates in the attempt to falsify his knowledge and to transform his perennial condition into an aim still to be attained.

It is in this sense that the apparently paradoxical thought expressed in the 'Reflections on Sin, Pain, Hope, and the True Way' should be understood: 'There is a goal, but no path; what we call the path is only wavering,' and 'Only our concept of Time makes it possible for us to call the day of the Last Judgment by that name; in reality it is a summary court in perpetual session [*Standrecht*].'[9] For man it is always already the day of the Last Judgment: the Last Judgment is his normal historical condition, and only his fear of facing it creates the illusion that it is still to

come. Kafka thus replaces the idea of a history infinitely unfolding along an empty, linear time (this is the history that compels the *Angelus Novus* to his unstoppable run) with the paradoxical image of a *state of history* in which the fundamental event of the human condition is perpetually taking place; the continuum of linear time is interrupted, but does not create an opening beyond itself.[10] The goal is inaccessible not because it is too far in the future but because it is present here in front of us; but its presence is constitutive of man's historicity, of his perennial lingering along a nonexistent path, and of his inability to appropriate his own historical situation.

This is why Kafka can say that the revolutionary movements that declare null and void everything that has happened before are right, because in reality nothing has happened yet. The condition of man who has gotten lost in history ends up looking like that of the southern Chinese in the story told in *The Great Wall of China*: 'There is also involved a certain feebleness of faith and imaginative power on the part of the people, that prevents them from raising the empire out of its stagnation in Peking and clasping it in all its palpable living reality to their own breasts, which yet desire nothing better than but once to feel that touch and then to die.' And yet 'this very weakness should seem to be one of the greatest unifying influences among our people; indeed, if one may dare to use the expression, the very ground on which we live.'[11]

In the face of this paradoxical situation, asking about art's task is the equivalent of asking what could be its task on the day of the Last Judgment, that is, in a condition (which for Kafka is man's very historical status) in which the angel of history has stopped and, in the interval between past and future, man has to face his own responsibility. Kafka answered this question by asking whether art could become transmission of the act of transmission: whether, that is, it could take as its content the task of transmission itself, independently of the thing to be transmitted. As Benjamin understood, Kafka's genius before the unprecedented historical situation of which he had become aware was that he 'sacrificed truth for the sake of transmissibility.'[12] Since the goal is already present and thus no path exists that could lead there, only the perennially late stubbornness of a messenger whose message is nothing other than the task of transmission can give back to man, who has lost his ability to appropriate his historical space, the concrete space of his action and knowledge.

In this way, at the limit of its aesthetic itinerary art abolishes the gap between the thing to be transmitted and the act of transmission and again comes closer to the mythic-traditional system, in which a perfect identity existed between the two terms. In this 'attack on the last earthly frontier,'[13] art transcends the aesthetic dimension and thus, with the construction of a totally abstract moral system, eludes the fate that destined it to kitsch. Yet, although it can reach the threshold of myth, it cannot cross it. If man could appropriate his historical condition, and if, seeing through the illusion of the storm that perennially pushes him along the infinite rail of linear time, he could exit his paradoxical situation, he would at the same time gain access to the total knowledge capable of giving life to a new cosmogony and to turn history into myth. But art alone cannot do this, since it is precisely in order to reconcile the historical conflict between past and future that it has emancipated itself from myth and linked itself to history.

By transforming the principle of man's delay before truth into a poetic process and renouncing the guarantees of truth for love of transmissibility, art succeeds once again in transforming man's inability to exit his historical status, perennially suspended in the inter-world between old and new, past and future, into the very space in which he can take the original measure of his dwelling in the present and recover each time the meaning of his action.

According to the principle by which it is only in the burning house that the fundamental architectural problem becomes visible for the first time, art, at the furthest point of its destiny, makes visible its original project.

Translated by Georgia Albert

Notes

1 Walter Benjamin, *Einbahnstraße* (One-way street), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. 4.1, ed. Tillman Rexroth, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1972, p. 138.

2 In this regard, see Hannah Arendt's remarks in *Men in Dark Times,* New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968, p. 193.

3 It is not difficult to notice that the alienating function of citations corresponds exactly to the alienation produced in criticism by the 'ready-made' and pop art. Here, too, an object whose meaning was guaranteed by the 'authority' of its daily use suddenly uses its traditional intelligibility to become charged with an uncanny power to traumatize. In his article 'What Is Epic Theater (ii),' Walter Benjamin defines the characteristic procedure of quotation as 'interruption': 'To quote a text means to interrupt its context.' Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2.2, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1972, p. 536.

4 It is interesting that Debord, in his search for a 'style of negation' as the language of revolutionary subversion, did not notice the implicit destructive potential of quotation. However, the use of 'détournement' and plagiarism, which he recommended, plays the same role in his discourse as Benjamin assigned to citation, since 'in the positive employment of existing concepts, it includes at the same time the intelligence of their rediscovered *fluidity* and of their necessary destruction .... [In this way] it expresses the domination of present criticism *over its entire past* .... [*Détournement*] appears in communication that knows that it cannot lay claim to any guarantee .... It is ... language that no reference to antiquity ... can confirm.' Guy Debord, *La société du spectacle,* Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1967, pp. 165, 167.

5 That the alienation value later reacquires economic value (and thus exchange value) means nothing other than that in our society alienation fulfills an economically appreciable function.

6 Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History,' in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, New York: Schocken, 1969, pp. 257–58.

7 For an iconographic interpretation of Dürer's woodcut, see Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl, *Dürers 'Melencolia I,' eine quellen- und typengeschichtliche Untersuchung,* Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1923, and Walter Benjamin's remarks in *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne, New York: Verso, 1977, pp. 148–58. The interpretation that I propose does not exclude a purely iconographical one but simply places it in a historical perspective. At any rate, the *typus acediae* from which Dürer's image derives is closely tied, according to Christian theology, to a desperation about man's *status viatoris*, that is, to a loss not of the achievement but of the 'path' to the achievement. By embedding the medieval description of sloth in a concrete historico-temporal experience, Dürer made it into the image of the condition of man, who, unable to find tradition and the experience of time inherent in it, is no longer able to find his present space and loses his way in history's linear time.

8 Franz Kafka, *The Blue Octavo Notebooks*, ed. Max Brod, trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eichne Wilkins, Cambridge, Mass.: Exact Change, 1991, p. 15.

9 Franz Kafka, 'Reflections on Sin, Pain, Hope, and the True Way,' in *The Great Wall of China*, trans. Willa Muir and Edwin Muir, New York: Schocken, 1946, pp. 283, 287.

10 The most penetrating analysis of Kafka's relationship with history can be found in Beda Allemann's essay 'Kafka et l'histoire' (in René Char et al., *L'endurance de la pensée: Pour saluer Jean Beaufret* [Plon: Paris, 1968]). One can also find there the interpretation of Kafka's concept of *Standrecht* as 'the state of history.' We can now put Kafka's image of a state of history side by side with Benjamin's idea of a 'now-time' (*Jetztzeit*), understood as a stop in happening, as well as the exigency expressed in the *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, according to which one should reach a concept of history that corresponds to the fact that the state of emergency is, in fact, the rule.

Rather than speaking of a historical *state*, one should perhaps more properly speak of a historical *ecstasy*. Man is, in fact, incapable of appropriating his historical condition and is therefore always 'beside himself' in history.

11 Kafka, *Great Wall of China*, p. 173.

12 Walter Benjamin, letter to Gerhard Schalem, June 12, 1938, in *Briefe*, ed. Gerschom Schalem and Theodor Adorno, vol. 2, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1966, p. 763.
13 Franz Kafka, *Tagebücher 1910–1923*, ed. Max Brod, Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1973, journal entry of January 16, 1922, p. 345.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Giorgio Agamben in English

Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture (1977), trans. R.L. Martinez, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
Infancy and History: Essays on the Destruction of Experience (1978), trans. L. Heron, London: Verso, 1993.
Language and Death: The Place of Negativity (1982), trans. K.E. Pinkus and M. Hardt, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
The Idea of Prose (1985), trans. M. Sullivan and S. Whitsitt, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.
The Coming Community (1990), trans. M. Hardt, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
The Man without Content (1994), trans. G. Albert, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life (1995), trans. D. Heller-Roazen, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
The End of the Poem: Studies in Poetics (1996), trans. D. Heller-Roazen, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
Means without End: Notes on Politics (1996), trans. V. Binetti and C. Casarino, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
Remnants of Auschwitz (1998), trans. D. Heller-Roazen, New York: Zone Books, 1999.
Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy, ed. and trans. D. Heller-Roazen, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
The Open: Man and Animal (2002), trans. K. Attell, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.
State of Exception (2003), trans. K. Attell, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
Profanations (2005), trans. J. Fort, New York: Zone Books, 2007.
What is an Apparatus? And Other Essays (2008), trans. D. Kishik and S. Pedatella, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
The Signature of All Things: On Method (2008), trans. L. di Santo and K. Attell, New York: Zone Books, 2009.

Further reading

Introductions to Agamben are offered by Durantaye (2009), Mills (2008), and Murray (2010). There are collections of critical essays on different aspects of his thought from Calarco and Decaroli (2007) and from Ross (2008). For studies of his work on language and biopolitics, see Attell (2009), Buch (2007), Clemens *et al.* (2008), Norris (2005), and Presutti (2008). Agamben's aesthetics is considered by Colebrook (2008), Diehl (2009), Mckim (2008), and Watkin (2010).

K. Attell, 'An esoteric dossier: Agamben and Derrida read Saussure', *English Literary History*, 2009, vol. 76, pp. 821–46.
R. Buch, 'Seeing the impossibility of seeing or the visibility of the undead: Giorgio Agamben's gorgon', *Germanic Review*, 2007, vol. 82, pp. 179–96.
M. Calarco and S. Decaroli (eds), *On Agamben: Sovereignty and Life*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
J. Clemens, N. Heron, and A. Murray (eds), *The Work of Giorgio Agamben: Law, Literature, Life*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
C. Colebrook, 'Agamben: aesthetics, potentiality, and life', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 2008, vol. 107, pp. 107–20. Special edition of the journal devoted to Agamben, republished as Ross (ed.), *The Agamben Effect*, 2008. Full details below.
J.F. Diehl, 'The poetics of loss: erotic melancholia in Agamben and Dickinson', *American Imago*, 2009, vol. 66, pp. 369–81.
L. de la Durantaye, *Giorgio Agamben: A Critical Introduction*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

J. Mckim, 'Agamben at Ground Zero – a memorial without content', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 2008, vol. 25, pp. 83–103.
C. Mills, *The Philosophy of Agamben*, Durham: Acumen, 2008.
A. Murray, *Giorgio Agamben*, London: Routledge, 2010.
A. Norris (ed.), *Politics, Metaphysics, and Death: Essays on Giorgio Agamben's Homo Sacer*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.
F. Presutti, 'Giorgio Agamben, Gilles Deleuze and the "Idea of Language" in the synthesis of "being"', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 2008, vol. 39, pp. 130–46.
A. Ross (ed.), *The Agamben Effect*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2008. Special edition of the *South Atlantic Quarterly*.
W. Watkin, *The Literary Agamben: Adventures in Logopoiesis*, London: Continuum, 2010.

Chapter 39

ALAIN BADIOU

INTRODUCTION

Arguably the greatest shortcoming of poststructuralist thought, as far as Badiou (b. 1937) is concerned, is that it fails to address the question of the ontology of the human subject. Poststructuralism has much to say about the subject: typically theses to the effect that the subject is 'dead', that is, the self is not a self-identical substance but the effect of a textual or structural process, such as difference or desire. But the problem with this is that the subject is reduced to being the mere effect or (even worse) an epiphenomenon of a process which applies to meaning and the world in general. There is therefore nothing that is proper to the subject. As Feltham and Clemens make the point, 'in poststructuralism there is no distinction between the general field of ontology and a theory of the subject; there is no tension between the being of the subject and being in general'.[1] Two fundamental philosophical problems concerning the human subject are identity (including the mind–body problem) and agency. While poststructuralism has addressed the former, largely through arguments to the effect that the subject has no substantial identity on account of the instability of language, it has said little or nothing about agency. This has led to poststructuralism being criticized for not articulating a framework or specifying the conditions for autonomous political action.

In his magnum opus, *Being and Event*, Badiou concentrates on the problem of agency.[2] His response to the lack of an ontology of the subject is not to approach the topic directly by proposing his own ontology of the subject, but to recognize a tension between the requirements of ontology and a theory of the subject. According to Feltham and Clemens, the question of agency for Badiou is 'not so much a question of how a subject can initiate an action in an autonomous manner but rather how a subject emerges through an autonomous chain of actions within a changing situation'.[3] Thus, the tension between ontology and a theory of the subject manifests itself as the question of how we are to think ontology in such a way that it allows a concept of an autonomous subject to emerge from the ontology's own processes. In this regard, Badiou joins Deleuze as a philosopher of immanence (despite crucial differences between them in other respects), where 'immanence' refers to the view that the autonomous subject is not a self-standing, substantial being in the world (as it is in pre-Kantian metaphysics) but a being immersed within an ontology whose subjectivity and autonomy are the results of relations at work in that ontology.

For Badiou, 'mathematics is ontology'.[4] In particular, it is the mathematics of set theory which he uses to construct his ontology. Drawing on his training in Paris as a mathematician, he argues that set theory provides a structure of thought, with ideas, for example, of belonging, difference, inclusion, expressed wholly in terms of number or quantity, and not quality. The quantity–quality distinction is vital. Badiou wants to avoid conducting his philosophy in terms of qualities because any quality – for example, the quality of being human, of having a foundation, of corresponding

– will be a concept drawn from natural language and so will be subject to the plays of meaning and interpretation privileged by poststructuralism. Thinking in terms of number or quantity avoids this. Set theory has its origins in the work of the German mathematician Georg Cantor. Whereas mathematics had traditionally worked with a single concept of infinity, in a paper published in 1874,[5] Cantor demonstrated that different infinities were possible, e.g. an endless sequence of integers (whole numbers), an endless sequence of *even* integers, an endless sequence of integers *that are squares* (numbers multiplied by themselves). Each sequence was described by Cantor as a 'set' (although the original German *Menge* was coined by his predecessor Bernhard Bolzano in the 1840s): a collection of objects (for example, the integers 0, 1, 2, and so on) which share a certain property but with each member nevertheless maintaining its own individuality. Placing numbers in sets allowed the one-to-one correspondence between members of different sets to be proved and, more importantly, allowed for proof of situations where members of one set cannot be put into one-to-one correspondence with another, as in the case (from his 1874 article) of real numbers not being in one-to-one correspondence with natural numbers. It was Cantor's realization that numbers could belong to sets, and that relations of one-to-one correspondence between sets may or may not obtain, which led to the idea that there are different infinities.

It is the concept of belonging that we need to focus on. Badiou describes a set as a 'consistent multiplicity': 'the totality of the elements of a multiplicity [that] can be thought without contradiction as "being together", such that their collection in "a thing" is possible'.[6] As Mullarkey observes, a set for Badiou is 'simply a oneness, a consistency of belonging *generated by the elements themselves* thought of in terms of their membership'.[7] A technical term of Badiou's introduced here is 'multiplicity' or 'the multiple'. This is his way of referring to the world without referring to qualities. The significance of the multiple, for Badiou, is that there is 'no defined concept of the multiple to be encountered anywhere' beyond saying that the multiple is 'a many'.[8] That is to say, the multiple cannot be explained in terms of *other qualities*; rather, it is simply a *quantity*. To think that the multiple has qualities is to fail to recognize that, on this ontology, qualities themselves are just additional multiples. Ontology, Badiou writes, 'attributes no other property to multiples than existence, because any "property" is itself a multiple'.[9]

How does this excursion into set theory help Badiou construct a theory of the autonomous subject? Through the process which will take him from the realm of quantities back to the realm of qualities, for it is in terms of how a quantity is understood to *belong to* or *be included in* a particular set that it becomes a quality. What exceeds being, understood as a multiplicity, without itself being a multiple, a thing, is the event. An event is something new and qualitative. Something happens, but how is this novelty to be explained when the building blocks of one's ontology are bare multiplicities? Which sets are at stake? It is the relation between being and event, worked out in terms of either belonging to or being included in a set, that Badiou seeks to establish.

The relation between subject, truth, and event is key to understanding the position art occupies in Badiou's philosophy. For Badiou, truth is neither a matter of *correspondence* nor a matter of *coherence*, the two principal models of truth exercised in philosophy, that is, correspondence with the facts or coherence with other statements and beliefs. Instead, truth occurs as a question of fidelity: how am I to do justice to this event, this new clustering of multiples? The claim here, according to Norris, is that in order to understand truth we first need to recognize the distinction between truth and truthfulness: the capacity of thought to transcend any present-best state of knowledge and access what was previously only available through an anticipatory grasp or some sense that current understanding represents a constraint on knowledge.[10] Mullarkey makes the point by asserting that 'truth and subjectivity are co-engendered through the "event"'.[11] The subject referred to here – the 'I' – is not a pre-given, substantial ego but a subjectivity that emerges *with the question of her capacity (or a capacity) to do justice to the event, as part of the process*

of questioning. But how can Badiou talk of fidelity if, at the level of quantities, all we have are multiplicities, when qualities are needed to do justice to the event? Qualities are introduced by what Badiou terms the 'conditions of philosophy'. They are four in number: science, love, politics, and art. They are conditions of philosophy in the sense that they are the 'intensities of existence' or passions (the first phrase is Badiou's, from *Logic of Worlds*)[12] in which the subject finds itself and acts. I could say that they are the states which move or seize the subject, but this implies an already existing subject. Instead, it is better to say that they are the ruptures in situations which call for the grouping together of multiples in events, thereby creating the questions of truth, post-evental fidelity, and subjective action. In this regard, the conditions of philosophy are what Badiou calls 'truth procedures', procedures which call for truth as a matter of choosing which sets apply.

But why are they conditions *of philosophy*? This is because of the way in which Badiou positions philosophy. As one might expect from a philosophical system which pays close attention to questions of relationship and belonging, just how philosophy is viewed and practised is a highly significant question. Customarily we talk of the philosophy *of art*, the philosophy *of science*, the theory *of knowledge*, political philosophy, etc. On the one hand, these philosophies are 'of' their subjects in that they study them. On the other, they do not belong to their subjects because they stand outside or above them as meta-studies, analysing the beliefs and actions of the practitioners who do in fact work within them. The tension between belonging and not-belonging is stronger for Badiou though. First, science, love, politics, and art are conditions in the sense that philosophy depends on them, is parasitic on these intensities of existence already being underway. Yet, second, philosophy for Badiou is also 'an action… in the form of a decision, a separation, a clear distinction' which suggests that it is its own event, distinguishing between sets, and with its own condition, apart from its four stated conditions.[13] There is also a third orientation, on account of philosophy's truth-seeking Platonic heritage, to which Badiou subscribes. Here, science, love, politics, and art are conditions of philosophy in that they are the conditions under which philosophy identifies truth. As Nancy writes, 'the function of [philosophy] consists in "exhibiting" each of [the four] conditions insofar as it [each condition] constitutes a "truth procedure"', where 'exhibiting' is to be understood as 'drawing out' or 'bringing forth a truth' rather than merely 'guaranteeing a conformity'.[14]

This is not the place to assess fully the status of philosophy in Badiou's thought. However, the question will not be far from our minds in as much as his aesthetics focuses on the relation between philosophy and art, where art is one of the four conditions of philosophy. Or rather, I should refer to Badiou's 'inaesthetics'. In his *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, he defines 'inaesthetics' as

> a relation between philosophy and art such that, while positing that art is itself the producer of truths, it in no way claims to turn art into an object for philosophy. By way of contrast to aesthetic speculation, inaesthetics describes the strictly intra-philosophical effects brought about by the independent existence of some works of art.[15]

Generally speaking, 'aesthetics' has several related meanings: (1) it refers to knowledge by means of the senses within ancient Greek thought; (2) it designates eighteenth-century interest in beauty and the fine arts which imitate beauty; and (3) since Kant, it is part of a body of philosophy which considers art as something that informs how knowledge, morality, and human being are conceptualized. It is the third sense which Badiou has in mind. As far as he is concerned, aesthetic speculation turns art 'into an object for philosophy'. Against this, an inaesthetic philosophy of art remains philosophical (it is 'intra-philosophical') but allows the work of art to retain its 'independent existence', that is, inaesthetics prevents the work of art from becoming an object of philosophy and instead talks about it philosophically in a way which is nonetheless appropriate to art. But as Rancière argues, this line of thinking assumes (or 'pre-emptively ensures', as Rancière

puts it) that 'there is something proper to art' and that 'what goes by the name of aesthetics... problematizes what is proper to art, i.e. the univocity of its concept, the relation between its unity and the plurality of arts, and modes of acknowledging its presence'.[16]

The question of art's singularity – its irreducibility to any other form of discourse or expression – and its relation to philosophy is the subject of the paper representing Badiou here. In 'Art and Philosophy', he argues that the twentieth century witnessed no new schema for thinking art, nothing to compare with classicism's commitment to representation, romanticism's assertion of art as truth, or didacticism's rejection of the idea that art possesses truth. A new schema is called for, he insists, since we have to rid ourselves of the one thing which has remained common to all previous schemas: the relation between art and truth or rather the way in which that relation has been thought. He asks: 'Does the truth testified by art belong to it absolutely? Or can this truth circulate among other registers of work-producing thought?' For him, the truth generated by art belongs to it entirely, and the role of philosophy in thinking art is to show the truth of art 'as it is'. But what belongs to art, as distinct from what might be thought about it by philosophy?

The question of what is pertinent to art in fact has to be asked for a second time because, while Badiou talks of the truth of art, truth in his terms can only emerge from an event. The event is the unit in Badiou's ontology which has the unique property of being both an element of a situation and the situation itself, on account of the fact that it is the rupture (by an element of the old situation) which allows change (the new situation) to come about; this belonging and not-belonging is important because of the paradox it poses for set theory's reliance on membership and inclusion. In the case of art, does truth belong to art or to the event which created it? To address this problem, Badiou presents the artwork as an 'artistic configuration initiated by an evental rupture'. The concept of configuration is suitably non-committal in allowing a range of ontological arrangements – a truth that is 'neither the work nor the author', which 'possesses neither a proper name nor a proper contour' – but we are left with the task of establishing what 'artistic configuration' might mean and how a configuration's being 'grasped' by truth can be articulated in philosophy.[17]

Notes

1 O. Feltham and J. Clemens, 'An introduction to Alain Badiou's philosophy', in A. Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, London: Continuum, 2003, p. 4.
2 A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. O. Feltham, London: Continuum, 2006.
3 Feltham and Clemens, 'Introduction to Alain Badiou's philosophy', in A. Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, p. 6.
4 Badiou, *Being and Event*, pp. 4, 6.
5 Cantor's paper was written and submitted to *Crelle's Journal* in 1873 but was rejected by one of its referees, the influential Leopold Kronecker. As a mathematical constructivist, Kronecker was only prepared to acknowledge the existence of mathematical objects that could be constructed finitely from natural numbers accessible by our intuition, that is to say, derived from our forms of understanding. The idea of different infinities, as demonstrated by Cantor, was something which could be neither supported nor sustained by Kronecker's constructivism. However, following the intervention of his friend, Richard Dedekind, Cantor's paper was published in *Crelle's Journal* in 1874 as 'Über eine Eigenschaft des Inbegriffes aller reellen algebraischen Zahlen' ('On a characteristic property of all real algebraic numbers').
6 Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 29.
7 J. Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy: An Outline*, London: Continuum, 2006, p. 92; original italics.
8 Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 29; quoted in Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy*, p. 92.
9 A. Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, eds and trans. O. Feltham and J. Clemens, London: Continuum, 2003, p. 50; quoted in Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy*, p. 86.
10 C. Norris, *Badiou's Being and Event*, London: Continuum, 2009, pp. 43, 173.
11 Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy*, p. 84.
12 A. Badiou, *The Logic of Worlds: Being and Event II*, trans. A. Toscano, London: Continuum, 2009.

13 A. Badiou, 'Philosophy as creative repetition', *The Symptom: On-Line Journal of Lacan.com*, 2007, vol. 8. Online. Available HTTP: http://www.lacan.com/badrepeat.html (accessed 6 January 2009).
14 J.-L. Nancy, 'Philosophy without conditions', in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, London: Continuum, 2004, p. 40.
15 A. Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, trans. A. Toscano, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005, p. xiv.
16 J. Rancière, 'Aesthetics, inaesthetics, anti-aesthetics', in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, London: Continuum, 2004, pp. 218–19.
17 Some clues as to what 'artistic configuration' might mean, and its relations with truth and philosophy, are given in 'Meditation Nineteen' and 'Meditation Twenty-Five' on Mallarmé and Hölderlin respectively in Badiou's *Being and Event*, pp. 191–98, 255–61. See also Norris's commentary on these sections in Norris, *Badiou's Being and Event*, pp. 115–28.

■ ■ ■

ART AND PHILOSOPHY

ALAIN BADIOU

This link has always been affected by a symptom – that of an oscillation or a pulse.

At its origins there lies the judgment of ostracism that Plato directed against poetry, theater, and music. We must face the fact that in the *Republic*, the founder of philosophy, clearly a refined connoisseur of all the arts of his time, spares only military music and patriotic song.

At the other extreme, we find a pious devotion to art, a contrite prostration of the concept – regarded as a manifestation of technical nihilism – before the poetic word, which is alone in offering the world up to the latent Openness of its own distress.[1]

But, after all, it is already with the sophist Protagoras that we encounter the designation of artistic apprenticeship as the key to education. An alliance existed between Protagoras and Simonides the poet – a subterfuge that Plato's Socrates tried to thwart, so as to submit its thinkable intensity to his own ends.

An image comes to mind, an analogical matrix of meaning: Historically, philosophy and art are paired up like Lacan's Master and Hysteric. We know that the hysteric comes to the master and says: 'Truth speaks through my mouth, I am *here*. You have knowledge, tell me who I am.' Whatever the knowing subtlety of the master's reply, we can also anticipate that the hysteric will let him know that it's not yet *it*, that her *here* escapes the master's grasp, that it must all be taken up again and worked through at length in order to please her. In so doing, the hysteric takes charge of the master, 'barring' him from mastery and becoming his mistress.[2] Likewise, art is always already there, addressing the thinker with the mute and scintillating question of its identity while through constant invention and metamorphosis it declares its disappointment about everything that the philosopher may have to say about it.

If he balks at amorous servitude and at the idolatry that represents the price of this exhausting and ever deceptive production of knowledge, the hysteric's master hardly has another choice than to give her a good beating.[3] Likewise, the philosopher-master remains divided, when it comes to art, between idolatry and censure. Either he will say to the young (his disciples) that at the heart of every virile education of reason lies the imperative of holding oneself at a remove from the Creature, or he will end up conceding that she alone – this opaque brilliance that cannot but hold us captive – instructs us about the angle from which truth commands the production of knowledge.

And since what we are required to elucidate is the link between art and philosophy, it seems that, formally speaking, this link is thought in accordance with two schemata.

The first is what I will call the *didactic* schema. Its thesis is that art is incapable of truth, or that all truth is external to art. This thesis will certainly acknowledge that art presents itself (like the hysteric) in the guise of effective, immediate, or naked truth. Moreover, it will suggest that this nakedness exposes art as the pure *charm* of truth. More precisely, it will say that art is the appearance of an unfounded or nondiscursive truth, of a truth that is exhausted in its being-there. But – and this is the whole point of the Platonic trial – this pretence or seduction will be rejected. The heart of the Platonic polemic about mimesis designates art not so much as an imitation of things, but as the imitation of the effect of truth. This is an imitation that draws its power from its *immediate* character. Plato will therefore argue that to be the prisoners of an immediate image of truth *diverts us from the detour*. If truth can exist as charm, then we are fated to lose the force of dialectical labor, of the slow argumentation that prepares the way for the ascent to the Principle. We must therefore denounce the supposedly immediate truth of art as a false truth, as the semblance that belongs to the effect of truth. The definition of art, and of art alone, is thus the following: To be the charm of a semblance of truth.

It follows that art must be either condemned or treated in a purely instrumental fashion. Placed under strict surveillance, art lends the transitory force of semblance or of charm to a truth that is prescribed *from outside*. Acceptable art must be subjected to the philosophical surveillance of truths. This position upholds a didactics of the senses whose aim cannot be abandoned to immanence. The norm of art must be education; the norm of education is philosophy. This is the first knot that ties our three terms (art, philosophy, and education) together.

In this perspective, the essential thing is the control of art. This control is possible. Why? Because if the truth of which art is capable comes to it from outside – if art is a didactics of the senses – it follows, and this point is crucial, that the 'good' essence of art is conveyed in its public effect, and not in the artwork itself. As Rousseau writes in the *Letter to D'Alembert*: 'The spectacle is made for the people, and it is only by its effects upon the people that its absolute qualities can be determined.'

In the didactic schema, the absolute of art is thus controlled by the public effects of semblance, effects that are in turn regulated by an extrinsic truth.

This educational injunction is itself absolutely opposed by what I will call the *romantic* schema. Its thesis is that art *alone* is capable of truth. What's more, it is in this sense that art accomplishes what philosophy itself can only point toward. In the romantic schema, art is the real body of truth, or what Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy have named 'the literary absolute.' It is patent that this real body is a glorious body. Philosophy might very well be the withdrawn and impenetrable Father – art is the suffering Son who saves and redeems. Genius is crucifixion and resurrection. In this respect, it is art itself that educates, because it teaches of the power of infinity held within the tormented cohesion of a form. Art delivers us from the subjective barrenness of the concept. Art is the absolute as subject – it is *incarnation*.

Nevertheless, between didactic banishment and romantic glorification (a 'between' that is not essentially temporal) there is – it seems – an age of relative peace between art and philosophy. The question of art does not torment Descartes, Leibniz, or Spinoza. It appears that these great classical thinkers do not have to choose between the severity of control and the ecstasy of allegiance.

Was it not Aristotle himself who had already signed, between art and philosophy, a peace treaty of sorts? All the evidence points to the existence of a third schema, the *classical* schema, of which one will say from the start that it *dehystericizes art*.

The classical *dispositif*, as constructed by Aristotle, is contained in two theses:

a) Art – as the didactic schema argues – is incapable of truth. Its essence is mimetic, and its regime is that of semblance.

b) This incapacity does not pose a serious problem (contrary to what Plato believed). This is because the *purpose* [*destination*] of art is not in the least truth. Of course, art is not truth, but it also does not claim to be truth and is therefore innocent. Aristotle's prescription places art under the sign of something entirely other than knowledge and thereby frees it from the Platonic suspicion. This other thing, which he sometimes names 'catharsis,' involves the deposition of the passions in a transference onto semblance. Art has a therapeutic function, and not at all a cognitive or revelatory one. Art does not pertain to the theoretical, but to the ethical (in the widest possible sense of the term). It follows that the norm of art is to be found in its utility for the treatment of the affections of the soul.

The great rules concerning art can be immediately inferred from the two theses of the classical schema.

The criterion of art is first of all that of liking. In no respect is 'liking' a rule of opinion, a rule of the greatest number. Art must be liked because 'liking' signals the effectiveness of catharsis, the real grip exerted by the artistic therapy of the passions.

Second, the name of what 'liking' relates to is not truth. 'Liking' is bound only to what extracts from a truth the arrangement of an identification. The 'resemblance' to the true is required only to the degree that it engages the spectator of art in 'liking,' that is, in an identification that organizes a transference and thus in a deposition of the passions. This scrap of truth is therefore not truth per se, but rather what *a truth constrains within the imaginary*. This 'imaginarization' of truth, which is relieved of any instance of the Real, is what the classical thinkers called 'verisimilitude' or 'likelihood.'

In the end, the peace between philosophy and art rests entirely on the demarcation of truth from verisimilitude. This is why the classical maxim par excellence is: 'The true is sometimes not the likely.' This maxim states the demarcation and maintains – *beside* art – the rights of philosophy. Philosophy, which clearly grants itself the possibility of being without verisimilitude. We encounter here a classical definition of philosophy: The unlikely truth.

What is the cost of this peace between philosophy and art? Without doubt, art is innocent, but this is because it is innocent of all truth. In other words, it is inscribed in the imaginary. Strictly speaking, within the classical schema, art is not a form of thought. It is entirely exhausted by its act or by its public operation. 'Liking' turns art into a service. To summarize, we could say that in the classical view, art is a public service. After all, this is how it is understood by the state in the 'vassalization' of art and artists by absolutism, as well as in the modern vicissitudes of funding. In terms of the link that preoccupies us here, the state is essentially classical (perhaps with the exception of the socialist state, which was rather didactic).

Let us briefly recapitulate our argument.

Didacticism, romanticism, and classicism are the possible schemata of the link between art and philosophy – the third term of this link being the education of subjects, the youth in particular. In didacticism, philosophy is tied to art in the modality of an educational surveillance of art's purpose, which views it as extrinsic to truth. In romanticism, art realizes within finitude all the subjective education of which the philosophical infinity of the idea is capable. In classicism, art captures desire and shapes [*éduque*] its transference by proposing a semblance of its object. Philosophy is summoned here only qua aesthetics: It has its say about the rules of 'liking.'

In my view, the century that is coming to a close was characterized by the fact that it did not introduce, on a massive scale, any new schema. Though it is considered to be the century of endings, breaks, and catastrophes, when it comes to the link that concerns us here, I see it instead as a century that was simultaneously conservative and eclectic.

What are the massive tendencies of thought in the twentieth century? Its massively identifiable *singularities*? I can see only three: Marxism, psychoanalysis, and German hermeneutics.

It is clear that as regards the thinking of art, Marxism is didactic, psychoanalysis classical, and Heideggerian hermeneutics romantic.

The proof that Marxism is didactic need not be located immediately in the evidence of the ukases and persecutions that were perpetrated in the socialist states. The surest proof lies in Brecht's unbridled creative thought. For Brecht, there exists a general and extrinsic truth, a truth the character of which is scientific. This truth is dialectical materialism, whose status as the solid base of the new rationality Brecht never cast into doubt. This truth is essentially philosophical, and the 'philosopher' is the leading character in Brecht's didactic dialogues. It is the philosopher who is in charge of the surveillance of art through the latent supposition of a dialectical truth. It is in this respect that Brecht remained a Stalinist, if by Stalinism we understand – as indeed we should – the fusion of politics and of dialectical materialist philosophy under the jurisdiction of the latter. We could also say that Brecht practiced a Stalinized Platonism. Brecht's supreme goal was to create a 'society of the friends of dialectics,' and the theater was, in more than one respect, the instrument of such a society. The alienation effect is a protocol of philosophical surveillance *in actu* with regard to the educational ends of theater. Semblance must be alienated [*mis à distance*] from itself so as to *show*, in the gap thus formed, the extrinsic objectivity of the true.

Fundamentally, Brecht's greatness lay in having obstinately searched for the immanent rules of a Platonic (didactic) art, instead of remaining content, like Plato, with classifying the existing arts as either good or bad. His 'non-Aristotelian' (meaning nonclassical and ultimately Platonic) theater is an artistic invention of the first caliber within the reflexive element of a subordination of art. Brecht theatrically reactivated Plato's antitheatrical measures. He did so by turning the possible forms of the subjectivation of an external truth into the focal point of art.

The importance of the epic dimension also originates in this program. The epic is what exhibits – in the interval of the performance – the *courage* of truth. For Brecht, art produces no truth, but is instead an elucidation – based on the supposition that the true exists – of the conditions for a courage of truth. Art, under surveillance, is a therapy against cowardice. Not against cowardice in general, but against cowardice *in the face of truth*. This is obviously why the figure of Galileo is central, and also why this play is Brecht's tormented masterpiece, the one in which the paradox of an epic that would be internal to the exteriority of truth turns upon itself.

It is evident, I think, that Heideggerian hermeneutics remains romantic. By all appearances, it exposes an indiscernible entanglement between the saying of the poet and the thought of the thinker. Nevertheless, the advantage is still with the poet, because the thinker is nothing but the announcement of a reversal, the promise of the advent of the gods at the height of our distress, and the retroactive elucidation of the historiality of being. While the poet, in the flesh of language, maintains the effaced guarding of the Open.

We could say that Heidegger unfolds the figure of the poet-thinker as the obverse of Nietzsche's philosopher-artist. But what interests us here and characterizes the romantic schema is that between philosophy and art it is *the same truth that circulates*. The retreat of being comes to thought in the conjoining of the poem and its interpretation. Interpretation is in the end nothing but the *delivery* of the poem over to the trembling of finitude in which thought strives to endure the retreat of being as clearing. Poet and thinker, relying on one another, embody within the word the opening out of its closure [*le déclos de sa cloture*]. In this respect, the poem, strictly speaking, cannot be equaled.

Psychoanalysis is Aristotelian, absolutely classical. In order to be persuaded of this, it suffices to read Freud's writings on painting and Lacan's pronouncements on the theater or poetry. In Freud and Lacan, art is conceived as what makes it so that the object of desire, which is beyond

symbolization, can subtractively emerge at the very peak of an act of symbolization. In its formal bearing, the work leads to the dissipation of the unspeakable scintillation of the lost object. In so doing, it ineluctably captivates the gaze or the hearing of the one who is exposed to it. The work of art links up to a transference because it exhibits, in a singular and contorted configuration, the blockage of the symbolic by the Real, the 'extimacy'[4] of the *objet petit a* (the cause of desire) to the Other (the treasure of the symbolic). This is why the ultimate effect of art remains imaginary.

I can therefore conclude as follows: This century, which essentially has not modified the doctrines concerning the link between art and philosophy, has nevertheless experienced the *saturation* of these doctrines. Didacticism is saturated by the state-bound and historical exercise of art in the service of the people. Romanticism is saturated by the element of pure promise – always brought back to the supposition of a return of the gods – in Heidegger's rhetorical equipment. Classicism, finally, is saturated by the self-consciousness conferred upon it by the complete deployment of a theory of desire. Whence, if one has not already fallen prey to the lures of an 'applied psychoanalysis,' the ruinous conviction that the relationship between psychoanalysis and art is never anything but a service rendered to psychoanalysis itself: Art as free service.

That today the three schemata are saturated tends to produce a kind of disentanglement of the terms, a desperate 'disrelation' between art and philosophy, together with the pure and simple collapse of what had circulated between them: the pedagogical theme.

From Dadaism to Situationism, the century's avant-gardes have been nothing but escort experiments for contemporary art, and not the adequate designation of the real operations of this art. The role of the avant-gardes was to represent, rather than to link. This is because they were nothing but the desperate and unstable search for a mediating schema, for a didactico-romantic schema. The avant-gardes were didactic in their desire to put an end to art, in their condemnation of its alienated and inauthentic character. But they were also romantic in their conviction that art must be reborn immediately as absolute – as the undivided awareness of its operations or as its own immediately legible truth. Considered as the harbingers of a didactico-romantic schema or as the partisans of the absoluteness of creative destruction, the avant-gardes were above all anticlassical.

Their limit lay in their incapacity to place a lasting seal on their alliances, with respect either to the contemporary forms of the didactic schema or to those of the romantic one. In empirical terms: Just like the fascism of Marinetti and the Futurists, the communism of Breton and the Surrealists remained merely allegorical. The avant-gardes did not achieve their conscious objective: to lead a united front against classicism. Revolutionary didactics condemned them on the grounds of their romantic traits: the leftism of total destruction and of a self-consciousness fashioned ex nihilo, an incapacity for action on a grand scale, a fragmentation into small groups. Hermeneutic romanticism condemned them on the grounds of their didactic traits: an affinity for revolution, intellectualism, contempt for the state. Above all, it condemned them because the didacticism of the avant-gardes was marked by a brand of aesthetic voluntarism. And we know that, for Heidegger, the will constitutes the last subjective figure of contemporary nihilism.

Today, the avant-gardes have disappeared. The global situation is basically marked by two developments: on the one hand, the saturation of the three inherited schemata, on the other, the closure of every effect produced by the only schema that the century applied, which was in fact a synthetic schema: didacto-romanticism.

The thesis of which this book is but a series of variations can therefore be stated as follows: In this situation of saturation and closure, it is necessary to propose a new schema, a fourth modality of the link between philosophy and art.

The method of our inquiry will at first be negative: What do the three inherited schemata – didactic, romantic, classical – have in common, that today we would need to rid ourselves of? I believe that the 'common' of these three schemata concerns the relation between art and truth.

The categories of this relation are immanence and singularity. 'Immanence' refers to the following question: Is truth really internal to the artistic effect of works of art? Or is the artwork instead nothing but the instrument of an external truth? 'Singularity' points us to another question: Does the truth testified by art belong to it absolutely? Or can this truth circulate among other registers of work-producing thought [*la pensée uvrante*]?

What can we immediately observe? First, that in the romantic schema, the relation of truth to art is indeed immanent (art exposes the finite descent of the Idea), but not singular (because we are dealing with *the* truth and the thinker's thought is not attuned to something different from what is unveiled in the saying of the poet). Second, that in didacticism, the relation is certainly singular (only art can exhibit a truth *in the form of semblance*), but not at all immanent, because the position of truth is ultimately extrinsic. And third, that in classicism, we are dealing only with the constraint that a truth exercises within the domain of the imaginary in the guise of verisimilitude, of the 'likely.'

In these inherited schemata, the relation between artworks and truth never succeeds in being at once singular and immanent.

We will therefore affirm this simultaneity. In other words: Art *itself* is a truth procedure. Or again: The philosophical identification of art falls under the category of truth. Art is a thought in which artworks are the Real (and not the effect). And this thought, or rather the truths that it activates, are irreducible to other truths – be they scientific, political, or amorous. This also means that art, as a singular regime of thought, is irreducible to philosophy.

Immanence: Art is rigorously coextensive with the truths that it generates.

Singularity: These truths are given nowhere else than in art.

According to this vision of things, what becomes of the third term of the link, the pedagogical function of art? Art is pedagogical for the simple reason that it produces truths and because 'education' (save in its oppressive or perverted expressions) has never meant anything but this: to arrange the forms of knowledge in such a way that some truth may come to pierce a hole in them.

What art educates us for is therefore nothing apart from its own existence. The only question is that of *encountering* this existence, that is, of thinking through a form of thought [*penser une pensée*].

Philosophy's relation to art, like its relation to every other truth procedure, comes down to *showing* it as it is. Philosophy is the go-between in our encounters with truths, the procuress of truth. And just as beauty is to be found in the woman encountered, but is in no way required of the procuress, so it is that truths are artistic, scientific, amorous, or political, and not philosophical.

The problem is therefore concentrated upon the *singularity* of the artistic procedure, upon what authorizes its irreducible differentiation – vis-à-vis science or politics, for example.

It is imperative to recognize that beneath its manifest simplicity – its naiveté, even – the thesis according to which art would be a truth procedure sui generis, both immanent and singular, is in fact an absolutely novel philosophical proposition. Most of the consequences of this thesis remain veiled, and it demands from us a considerable labor of reformulation. The symptom of this novelty can be registered when we consider that Deleuze, for example, continues to place art on the side of sensation as such (percept and affect), in paradoxical continuity with the Hegelian motif of art as the 'sensible form of the Idea.' Deleuze thereby disjoins art from philosophy (which is devoted to the invention of concepts alone), in line with a modality of demarcation that still leaves the destination of art as a form of thought entirely unapparent. This is because if one fails to summon the category of truth in this affair, one cannot hope to succeed in establishing the plane of immanence from which the differentiation between art, science, and philosophy can proceed.

I think that the principal difficulty in this respect derives from the following point: When one undertakes the thinking of art as an immanent production of truths, *what is the pertinent unity*

of what is called 'art'? Is it the artwork itself, the singularity of a work? Is it the author, the creator? Or is it something else?

In actual fact, the essence of the question has to do with the problem of the relation between the infinite and the finite. A truth is an infinite multiplicity. I cannot establish this point here by way of formal demonstration, as I have done elsewhere.[5] Let us say that this was the insight proper to the partisans of the romantic schema, before they obliterated their discovery in the aesthetic diagram of finitude, of the artist as the Christ of the Idea. Or, to be more conceptual: The infinity of a truth is the property whereby it subtracts itself from its pure and simple identity with the established forms of knowledge.

A work of art is essentially finite. It is trebly finite. First of all, it exposes itself as finite objectivity in space and/or in time. Second, it is always regulated by a Greek principle of completion: It moves within the fulfillment of its own limit. It signals its display of all the perfection of which it is capable. Finally, and most importantly, it sets itself up as an inquiry into the question of its own finality. It is the persuasive procedure of its own finitude. This is, after all, why the artwork is irreplaceable in all of its points (another trait that distinguishes it from the generic infinite of the true): Once 'left' to its own immanent ends, it is as it will forever be, and every touch-up or modification is either inessential or destructive.

I would even happily argue that the work of art is in fact the only finite thing that exists – that art creates finitude. Put otherwise, art is the creation of an intrinsically finite multiple, a multiple that exposes its own organization in and by the finite framing of its presentation and that turns this border into the stakes of its existence.

Thus, if one wishes to argue that the work is a truth, by the same token, one will also have to maintain that it is the descent of the infinite-true into finitude. But this figure of the descent of the infinite into the finite is precisely the kernel of the romantic schema that thinks art as incarnation. It is striking to see that this schema is still at work in Deleuze, for whom art entertains with the chaotic infinite the most faithful of relationships precisely because it configures the chaotic within the finite.

It does not appear that the desire to propose a schema of the art/philosophy link that would be neither classical, didactic, nor romantic is compatible with the retention of the work as the pertinent unit of inquiry – at least not if we wish to examine art under the sign of the truths of which it is capable.

All the more so given a supplementary difficulty: Every truth originates in an event. Once again, I leave this assertion in its axiomatic state. Let us say that it is vain to imagine that one could *invent* anything at all (and every truth is an invention) were nothing to happen, were 'nothing to have taken place but the place.' One would then be back at an 'ingenious' or idealistic conception of invention. The problem that we need to deal with is that it is impossible to say of the work *at one and the same time* that it is a truth and that it is the event whence this truth originates. It is very often argued that the work of art must be thought of as an evental singularity, rather than as a structure. But every fusion of the event and truth returns us to a 'Christly' vision of truth, because a truth is then nothing but its own evental self-revelation.

I think the path to be followed is encapsulated in a small number of propositions.

– As a general rule, a work is not an event. A work is a fact of art. It is the fabric from which the artistic procedure is woven.

– Nor is a work of art a truth. A truth is an artistic procedure initiated by an event. This procedure is *composed* of nothing but works. But it does not manifest itself (as infinity) in any of them. The work is thus the local instance or the differential point of a truth.

– We will call this differential point of the artistic procedure its *subject*. A work is the subject of the artistic procedure in question, that is, the procedure to which this work belongs. In other words: An artwork is a subject point of an artistic truth.

– The sole being of a truth is that of works. An artistic truth is a (infinite) generic multiple of works. But these works weave together the being of an artistic truth only by the chance of their successive occurrence.
– We can also say this: A work is a situated *inquiry* about the truth that it locally actualizes or of which it is a finite fragment.
– The work is thus submitted to a principle of novelty. This is because an inquiry is retroactively validated as a real work of art only inasmuch as it is an inquiry *that had not taken place*, an unprecedented subject-point within the trajectory of a truth.
– Works compose a truth within the post-evental dimension that institutes *the constraint of an artistic configuration*. In the end, a truth is an artistic configuration initiated by an event (in general, an event is a group of works, a singular multiple of works) and unfolded through chance in the form of the works that serve as its subject points.

In the final analysis, the pertinent unit for a thinking of art as an immanent and singular truth is thus neither the work nor the author, but rather the artistic configuration initiated by an evental rupture (which in general renders a prior configuration obsolete). This configuration, which is a generic multiple, possesses neither a proper name nor a proper contour, not even a possible totalization in terms of a single predicate. It cannot be exhausted, only imperfectly described. It is an artistic truth, and everybody knows that there is no truth of truth. Finally, an artistic configuration is generally designated by means of abstract concepts (the figural, the tonal, the tragic …).

What are we to understand, more precisely, by 'artistic configuration'?

A configuration is not an art form, a genre, or an 'objective' period in the history of art, nor is it a 'technical' *dispositif*. Rather, it is an identifiable sequence, initiated by an event, comprising a virtually infinite complex of works, when speaking of which it makes sense to say that it produces – in a rigorous immanence to the art in question – a truth *of this art*, an art-truth. Philosophy will bear the trace of this configuration inasmuch as it will have to show in what sense this configuration lets itself be grasped by the category of truth. The philosophical montage of the category of truth will in turn be singularized by the artistic configurations of its time. In this sense, it is true to say that, more often than not, a configuration is thinkable at the juncture of an effective process within art and of the philosophies that seize this process.

One will point to Greek tragedy, for example, which has been grasped as a configuration time and again, from Plato or Aristotle to Nietzsche. The initiating event of tragedy bears the name 'Aeschylus,' but this name, like every other name of an event, is really the index of a central void in the previous situation of choral poetry. We know that with Euripides, the configuration reaches its point of saturation. In music, rather than referring to the tonal system, which is far too structural a *dispositif*, one will refer to the 'classical style' in the sense that Charles Rosen speaks of it, that is, as an identifiable sequence stretching out between Haydn and Beethoven. Likewise, one will doubtless say that – from Cervantes to Joyce – the novel is the name of a configuration for prose.

It will be noted that the saturation of a configuration (the narrative novel around the time of Joyce, the classical style around that of Beethoven, etc.) in no way signifies that said configuration is a finite multiplicity. Nothing from within the configuration itself either delimits it or exposes the principle of its end. The rarity of proper names and the brevity of the sequence are inconsequential empirical data. Besides, beyond the proper names retained as significant illustrations of the configuration or as the 'dazzling' subject points of its generic trajectory, there is always a virtually infinite quantity of subject points – minor, ignored, redundant, and so on – that are no less a part of the immanent truth whose being is provided by the artistic configuration. Of course, it can happen

that the configuration no longer gives rise to distinctly perceivable works or to decisive inquiries into its own constitution. It can also happen that an incalculable event comes to reveal in retrospect a configuration to be obsolete with respect to the constraints introduced by a new configuration. But in any case, unlike the works that constitute its material, a truth configuration is intrinsically infinite. This clearly means that the configuration ignores every internal maximum, every apex, and every peroration. After all, a configuration may always be seized upon again in epochs of uncertainty or rearticulated in the naming of a new event.

From the fact that the thinkable extraction of a configuration often takes place on the edge of philosophy – because philosophy is conditioned by art *as singular truth* and therefore by art as arranged into infinite configurations – we must above all not conclude that it is philosophy's task to think art. Instead, *a configuration thinks itself in the works that compose it*. Let's not forget that a work is an inventive inquiry into the configuration, which therefore thinks the thought that the configuration *will have been* (under the presumption of its infinite completion). To put it more precisely: The configuration thinks itself through the test posed by an inquiry that, at one and the same time, reconstructs it locally, sketches its 'to come,' and retroactively reflects its temporal arc. From this point of view, it is necessary to maintain that art – as the configuration 'in truth' of works – is in each and every one of its points the thinking of the thought that it itself is [*pensée de la pensée qu'il est*].

We can therefore declare that we've inherited a threefold problem:

– What are the contemporary configurations of art?
– What becomes of philosophy as conditioned by art?
– What happens to the theme of education?

We will leave the first point alone. The whole of contemporary thinking about art is full of inquiries – often enthralling ones – about the artistic configurations that have marked the century: dodecaphonic music, novelistic prose, the age of poets, the rupture of the figurative, and so on.

On the second point, I cannot but reiterate my own convictions: Philosophy, or rather *a* philosophy, is always the elaboration of a category of truth. Philosophy does not itself produce any effective truth. It seizes truths, shows them, exposes them, announces that they exist. In so doing, it turns time toward eternity – since every truth, as a generic infinity, is eternal. Finally, philosophy makes disparate truths compossible and, on this basis, it states the being of the time in which it operates as the time of the truths that arise within it.

Concerning the third point, let us recall that the only education is an education *by* truths. The entire, insistent problem is that there be truths, without which the philosophical category of truth is entirely empty and the philosophical act nothing but an academic quibble.

This question of the existence of truths (that 'there be' truths) points to a coresponsibility of art, which produces truths, and philosophy, which, under the condition that there are truths, is duty-bound to make them manifest (a very difficult task indeed). Basically, to make truths manifest means the following: to distinguish truths from opinion. So that the question today is this and no other: Is there something besides opinion? In other words (one will, or will not, forgive the provocation), is there something besides our 'democracies'?

Many will answer, myself among them: 'Yes.' Yes, there are artistic configurations, there are works that constitute the thinking subjects of these configurations, and there is philosophy to separate conceptually all of this from opinion. Our times are worth more than the label on which they pride themselves: 'democracy.'

In order to nourish this conviction in the reader, we will therefore begin with some philosophical *identifications* of the arts. Poetry, theater, cinema, and dance will be our pretexts.

Translated by Alberto Toscano

Notes

1 Badiou is here alluding to the critique of Heideggerian poetics that served as the focus of a seminar at the Collège International de Philosophie and that was later the object of a volume edited by Jacques Rancière, *La politique des poètes*, Paris: Albin Michel, 1992, to which Badiou himself contributed the essay 'L'âge des poètes' (pp. 21–38). The subtitle of this volume was *Pourquoi des poètes en temps de détresse*. Heidegger's notion of 'distress' [*Not*] appears prominently in his *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999, section 17. [*Editor*: all notes are by the translator.]

2 In using the expression *prend barre*, Badiou is alluding to the Lacanian theory of the four discourses, and in particular to Lacan's schema for the discourse of the hysteric. In this discourse, the subject (denoted in Lacan by a barred S) 'takes charge' [*prend barre*] of the master signifier (S1), in such a way that it leads knowledge (S2) to produce the *objet petit a* as the truth of the hysteric, which is in turn represented in Lacan's diagram by an *a* lying beneath the bar that separates it from the barred S. Badiou's allusion is thus to the two senses of the bar, the bar *within* the hysteric subject and the one *over* the *objet petit a*, which the hysteric (in the position of the 'agent') attains as her own truth by displacing the master to the dominated position (or position of the 'other'). See Jacques Lacan, *On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge (Seminar XX)*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink, New York: Norton, 1998, pp. 16–17. For a lucid explanation of this aspect of Lacanian doctrine, see the entry 'Discourse' in Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 44–46.

3 *Donner du bâton*, literally 'giving stick,' an expression related to the earlier *prendre barre*, since a *bâton* is also a vertical line.

4 On this Lacanian neologism, see Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary*, pp. 58–59.

5 See Meditation 31 in Alain Badiou, *L'être et l'événement*, Paris: Seuil, 1988, pp. 361–77.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Alain Badiou in English

The Concept of Model: An Introduction to the Materialist Epistemology of Mathematics (1970), trans. L.F. Zachary and L. Fraser, Melbourne: re.press, 2007.
Theory of the Subject (1982), trans. B. Bosteels, London: Continuum, 2009.
Being and Event (1988), trans. O. Feltham, London: Continuum, 2006.
Manifesto for Philosophy (1989), trans. N. Madarasz, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.
Number and Numbers (1990), trans. R. Mackay, Cambridge: Polity, 2008.
Conditions (1992), trans. S. Corcoran, London: Continuum, 2009.
Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil (1994), trans. P. Hallward, London: Verso, 2004.
On Beckett (1995), ed. N. Power, trans. A. Toscano, Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2003.
Deleuze: The Clamor of Being (1997), trans. L. Burchill, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism (1997), trans. R. Brassier, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
Handbook of Inaesthetics (1998), trans. A. Toscano, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.
Metapolitics (1998), trans. J. Barker, London: Verso, 2005.
Briefings on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology (1998), trans. N. Madarasz, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.
Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy, eds and trans. O. Feltham and J. Clemens, London: Continuum, 2003.
Theoretical Writings, trans. R. Brassier, London: Continuum, 2004.
The Century (2005), trans. A. Toscano, Cambridge: Polity, 2007.
Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2 (2006), trans. A. Toscano, London: Continuum, 2009.
The Meaning of Sarkozy (2007), trans. D. Fernbach, London: Verso, 2008.
Polemics, ed. and trans. S. Corcoran, London: Verso, 2007.

Further reading

Introductions to Badiou's philosophy are given by Barker (2001), Bartlett and Clemens (2010), Feltham and Clemens (2003), Hallward (2003, 2008), Norris (2009), and Pluth (2010). For collections of essays covering a range of perspectives on his thought, see Ashton *et al*. (2006) and Wilkens (2005). Badiou's politics is considered by Johnston (2009) and Wilkens (2005). Hallward (2004) and Mullarkey (2006) assess the implications of his ideas for the future of philosophy, with Nancy (2004) and Riera (2005) focusing on his concept of the conditions of philosophy. Studies of his aesthetics (or inaesthetics) are offered by Lecercle (2010), Noys (2009), Rancière (2004), and Tanke (2009).

P. Ashton, A.J. Bartlett, and J. Clemens (eds), *The Praxis of Alain Badiou*, Seddon, Victoria: re.press, 2006.
J. Barker, *Alain Badiou: A Critical Introduction*, London: Pluto Press, 2001.
A.J. Bartlett and J. Clemens (eds), *Alain Badiou: Key Concepts*, Durham: Acumen, 2010.
O. Feltham and J. Clemens, 'An introduction to Alain Badiou's philosophy', in A. Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, London: Continuum, 2003, pp. 1–38.
P. Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
——— (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, London: Continuum, 2004.
———, *Alain Badiou: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2008.
A. Johnston, *Badiou, Žižek, and Political Transformations: The Cadence of Change*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009.
J.-J. Lecercle, *Badiou and Deleuze Read Literature*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.
J. Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy: An Outline*, London: Continuum, 2006.
J.-L. Nancy, 'Philosophy without conditions', in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, London: Continuum, 2004, pp. 39–49.
C. Norris, *Badiou's Being and Event*, London: Continuum, 2009.
B. Noys, '"Monumental construction": Badiou and the politics of aesthetics', *Third Text*, 2009, vol. 23, pp. 383–92.
E. Pluth, *Badiou: A Philosophy of the New*, Cambridge: Polity, 2010.
J. Rancière, 'Aesthetics, inaesthetics, anti-aesthetics', in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, London: Continuum, 2004, pp. 218–31.
G. Riera (ed.), *Alain Badiou: Philosophy and its Conditions*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005.
J.J. Tanke, 'Reflections on the philosophy and anti-philosophy of art: Badiou and Rancière', *Philosophy Today*, 2009, vol. 53, pp. 217–30.
M. Wilkens (ed.), *The Philosophy of Alain Badiou*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2005. Special issue of the journal *Polygraph*, vol. 17.

Chapter 40

JACQUES RANCIÈRE

INTRODUCTION

A defining moment in Jacques Rancière's (b. 1940) political and philosophical career was his reaction to the responses of his fellow intellectuals to the May 1968 student uprising in Paris. Born in Algeria, Rancière became a student of the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, and collaborated with him on *Reading 'Capital'* in 1965. However, Rancière publicly distanced himself from Althusser after the latter reacted to the student uprising initially by remaining silent (he was in a psychiatric hospital at the time) and subsequently by dismissing the students' actions as counter-revolutionary and bourgeois. The distance widened when, in his 1974 book *The Lesson of Althusser*, Rancière reached the conclusion that, as Rockhill makes the point, 'Althusser's school was a "philosophy of order" whose very principles anaesthetized the revolt against the bourgeoisie'.[1] Rancière was also unimpressed by the responses given by Deleuze and Lyotard to the events of May 1968. Their politics of difference, focusing on the conceptual differences underlying political struggle, as Rancière saw it, amounted to a reversal of Marx's statement in the *Theses on Feuerbach*: 'We tried to transform the world in diverse ways, now it is a matter of interpreting it.'[2] As if in reaction to the positions of his fellow philosophers, the books which followed sought to challenge the positions philosophy takes when it claims to address or speak for others, for anyone who it is assumed (by philosophy) does not think, such as the proletariat, the poor, or the underprivileged. For example, *The Nights of Labour* (1981) was characterized by thorough cultural and historical research of extraphilosophical material – the records of lives of workers – and elicited the political knowledge and sophistication of the workers through a detailed examination of the records. *The Philosopher and His Poor* (1983) maintained the challenge from inside philosophy: an account of the difficulties Marx, Sartre, and Bourdieu encountered in trying to articulate a philosophy of the poor given Plato's assertion that workers should perform nothing else except their work, with the intimation from Rancière that maybe philosophy needs poverty for its own possibility.

The demands that philosophy should be attentive to the particularities of experience, and that it should be wary of assuming qualities are distributed in terms of groups (philosophers think, workers work, etc.), inform Rancière's aesthetics. For him, aesthetics and politics are intimately linked; they are both facets of what he calls 'the distribution of the sensible':

> the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it… This apportionment of parts and positions is based on a distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity that determines the very manner in which something in common lends itself to participation and in what way various individuals have a part in this distribution.[3]

There are traces here of the Kantian thesis that sense perception is organized, where the organization is governed not by an external world but by a set of human or subjective concepts and interests. The shape of experience, the way some things are clustered together, and others are kept apart, is attributable to principles of ordering *in which we participate*. The fact that sensibility is distributed creates a common ground for aesthetics and politics in that what we think of as the *merely* or *purely* aesthetic becomes the form of politics. Aesthetics, for Rancière, is not a self-contained, self-referring domain occupied by pure sensations or disinterested experiences of beauty, but the site in which contests are fought *and felt*. As he writes in *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (1995), 'there never has been any "aestheticization" of politics in the modern age because politics is aesthetic in principle'.[4] In politics, what is right or what is just will always have to be *demonstrated, made manifest, brought to sensibility*. 'The *demonstration* proper to politics,' he argues, 'is always both argument and opening up the world where argument can be received and have an impact – argument about the very existence of such a world.'[5]

Politics, for Rancière, is not the struggle for power, nor the exercise of power, but the organization of spaces, where 'spaces' are those arrangements and settings-in-place which define and enable particular commonalities and shared experiences. Politics, he writes,

> is the configuration of a specific space, the framing of a particular sphere of experience, of objects posited as common and as pertaining to a common decision, of subjects recognized as capable of designating these objects and putting forward arguments about them…
>
> This distribution and redistribution of places and identities, this apportioning and reapportioning of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, and of noise and speech constitutes what I call the distribution of the sensible.

Aesthetics occurs as politics, for Rancière, because political shifts in the organization of experience are manifest aesthetically through the different kinds of experience that become available. Aesthetic experience is conventionally defined as the experience of art, beauty, and the senses. What Rancière shows is that these forms of experience cannot be separated from matters of community because, whatever the object of aesthetic appreciation is, it will always be something which has a situation or a world, a setting which requires understanding, and therefore something which is bound up with the discursive processes – argument, agreement, disagreement, etc. – necessary for sustaining its political space. This emphasis on community and context might strike us as odd because we are used to aesthetics as an autonomous realm: aesthetic judgment as a disinterested reflection on an object or scene, where no practical or worldly implication is sought. But this is a concept of aesthetics which Rancière contests. It is a concept which has 'emphasized aesthetics as partition of the perceptible', dividing it from politics, and created 'an evaluation of the perceptible that is distinct from any judgment about the use to which it is put'.[6] Ironically, he observes, Kant introduces the notion of *sensus communis*, a 'common sense', in order to account for the universality of aesthetic judgment. This is the idea that, when we utter an aesthetic judgment, we want it to hold for everyone and not just be an expression of personal preference. But this is only after Kant has reinforced the detached, disinterested nature of aesthetic judgment, that is to say, after aesthetics has been made a form of judgment that involves no worldly, determinate conceptualization whatsoever. It is this move that is widely interpreted as introducing the concept of autonomous aesthetics. But, for Rancière, Kant's *sensus communis* is a community *which has to be assumed* because aesthetics' more immediate connection with the political realm has been partitioned off.

The thesis that art and politics are 'linked, beneath themselves' as 'two forms of distribution of the sensible' is explored in depth in the chapter representing Rancière in this volume. The relation between art and politics as it is widely understood, he declares, is caught between two opposing views.

On the one hand, there is the view, attributable primarily to philosophers and art historians, that identifies art's political radicality with its capacity to present forms of experience which exceed the everyday or the conceptually graspable; Lyotard's appropriation of Kant's sublime is one example. On the other hand, there is (what Rancière characterizes as) the more 'modest', relational approach, taken recently by artists, museum directors, curators, and critics, which, rather than trying to transform the world through the creation of new, unique forms, rearranges already existing objects and images 'to create or re-create bonds between individuals' and 'to give rise to new modes of confrontation and participation'. Rather than favouring one side or the other, Rancière sets out to trace the logic responsible for causing these two strands to unravel from the otherwise intimate relation between artistic radicality and political radicality which, for him, is aesthetics.

Common to both sides, he suggests, is acceptance of a category of art which belongs to an 'aesthetic regime', as opposed to a 'representative regime'. With the latter, an object is accepted as an artwork because it 'represents' an idea, an archetype, or an already existing form, whereas, with the former, an object is accepted as an artwork because it is ascribed to 'a specific sensorium', which is to say that it is a different form of sensory experience from ordinary experience and, as such, requires a new organization of our categories or, in Rancière's terms, a new form of distribution of the sensible. Examples of artworks within the aesthetic regime include (for holders of the 'exceeding the everyday' view) Schiller's *Juno Ludovisi*, Barnett Newman's *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*, and (for proponents of relational aesthetics) installations and performances. The significance of the concept of art addressing a particular sensorium is that it brings into sharp relief the difference which causes the two strands to unravel. From the 'same initial kernel' of a specific, heterogeneous sensibility which calls for a new distribution of concepts and commonalities, a promise of community is granted either by something's *being a work of art* with its own distribution of the sensible, or by something's *not being a work of art* and simply inviting us to participate in an already defined common space. This contradiction, Rancière suggests, 'is originary and unceasingly at work'.

Notes

1 G. Rockhill, 'Translator's introduction: Jacques Rancière's politics of perception', in J. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, London: Continuum, 2004, pp. 1–6; p. 1.
2 Quoted in Rockhill, 'Translator's introduction: Jacques Rancière's politics of perception', pp. 1–2.
3 J. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. G. Rockhill, London: Continuum, 2004, p. 12.
4 J. Rancière, *Disagreements: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. J. Rose, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, p. 58.
5 Ibid., p. 56.
6 Ibid., p. 57.

■ ■ ■

AESTHETICS AS POLITICS

JACQUES RANCIÈRE

The same assertion is bandied about nearly everywhere today, namely the claim that we are over and done with aesthetic utopia, with a certain idea of artistic radicality and its capacity to perform an absolute transformation of the conditions of collective existence. This idea fuels all those high-sounding polemics pointing to art's disaster, born of its dealings with fallacious

promises of social revolution and the philosophical absolute. Leaving these media squabbles aside, it is possible to distinguish between two great conceptions of art's 'post-utopian' present.

The first attitude is above all due to philosophers and art historians. It claims to be able to extricate artistic pursuits and creations from the aesthetic utopias of the new life, which compromised them, either in the great totalitarian projects or in the commercial aestheticization of life. Art's radicality here, then, is the singular power of presence, of appearing and of inscription, the power that tears experience from ordinariness. There has been a strong tendency to conceive this power in terms of the Kantian concept of the 'sublime' as the irreducible and heterogeneous presence at the heart of the sensible of a force that exceeds it.

However, this reference can be interpreted in two ways. The first sees in the singular power of the work the founding of a being-in-common, anterior to the various different possible forms of politics. Such, for example, was the meaning of an exhibition organized in Brussels in 2001 by Thierry de Duve under the title *Voici*, itself divided into three sections: *Me voici*, *Vous voici*, *Nous voici*. The key to this apparatus was provided by a canvas by Édouard Manet, the so-called father of pictorial 'modernity': not *Olympia* or *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, but a work from his youth, the *Christ mort*, based on a work by Francisco Ribalta. This open-eyed Christ, resurrected by the death of God, turns art's power of presentation into a substitute for the communitarian power of Christian incarnation. This power of incarnation, ascribed to the very act of showing, then also proved transmittable to a Donald Judd parallelepiped, to Joseph Beuys' display of East-German butter packets, to Philippe Bazin's series of baby photographs or to Marcel Broodthaers' documents of a fictitious museum.

The other way, by contrast, radicalizes the idea of the 'sublime', construing it as an irreducible gap between the idea and the sensible. It is in this way that Lyotard sees the mission of modern art as being to bear witness to the fact of the unpresentable. The singularity of appearing is therefore a negative presentation. The monochromy of a Barnett Newman canvas cleaved by a lightning flash or the naked speech of a Paul Celan or a Primo Levi are, for him, the model of these inscriptions. Conversely, mixing the abstract and the figurative on trans-avant-gardist paintings, not to mention the hodgepodge of installations that play on the indiscernibility between works of art and objects or icons of commerce, represent the nihilist accomplishment of aesthetic utopia.

The idea that these two visions have in common is clear. The very opposition between the Christian power of incarnation of the word and the Jewish prohibition on representation, between the eucharistic host and the burning Mosaic bush, reveals a dazzling, heterogeneous singularity of artistic form, one that commands a sense of community. But this is a community which builds itself on the ruining of perspectives for political emancipation to which modern art was able to link up. It is an ethical community which revokes every project of collective emancipation.

If this position has some favour with philosophers, it is quite another one that is keenly asserted by artists and professionals working in artistic institutions today – museum directors, gallery directors, curators and critics. Instead of making a contrast between artistic radicality and aesthetic utopia, this other position endeavours to keep the two equally at a distance. It replaces them with the proclamation of art's new modesty – it is modest not only as regards its capacity to transform the world, but also as regards claims about the singularity of its objects. This art is not the founding of a common world through the absolute singularity of form; it is a way of redisposing the objects and images that comprise the common world as it is already given, or of creating situations apt to modify our gazes and our attitudes with respect to this collective environment. Such micro-situations, which vary only slightly from those of ordinary

life and are presented in an ironic and playful vein rather than a critical and denunciatory one, aim to create or re-create bonds between individuals, to give rise to new modes of confrontation and participation. The principle of so-called relational art here is exemplary: in contrast to the radical heterogeneity of the shock of the *aistheton* that Lyotard sees on a Barnett Newman canvas stands the practice of a Pierre Huyghe, who, instead of the advertisement that had been expected, registers on a billboard an enlarged photograph of the place and its users.

I do not intend to decide in favour of one or other of these two attitudes. Instead I want to examine what they testify to and what renders them possible. They are in fact the two strands that emerge by undoing the alliance between artistic radicality and political radicality, an alliance whose proper name is today's incriminated term of aesthetics. Therefore, instead of deciding in favour of one of these positions, I will attempt to reconstitute the logic of the 'aesthetic' relation between art and politics from which they are derived. I will base my analysis on what both these ostensibly anti-aesthetic stagings of 'post-utopian' art have in common. In contrast to the denounced utopia, the latter proposes the modest forms of a micropolitics that is sometimes not far from the community politics advocated by our governments. The former, on the contrary, contrasts utopia with a power of art that ensues from its distance with respect to ordinary experience. Nevertheless, both positions are one in reasserting art's 'communitarian' function: that of constructing a specific world space, a new form of dividing up the common world. The aesthetics of the sublime places art under the sign of an immemorial debt towards an absolute Other. But it confers on it an historic mission, assigned to a subject it calls the 'avant-garde': to constitute a tissue of sensible inscriptions at an absolute distance from the world of products and their commercial equivalence. Relational aesthetics rejects art's claims to self-sufficiency as much as its dreams of transforming life, but even so it reaffirms an essential idea: that art consists in constructing spaces and relations to reconfigure materially and symbolically the territory of the common. *In situ* art practices, displacements of film towards the spatialized forms of museum installations, contemporary forms of spatializing music, and current theatre and dance practices – all these things head in the same direction, towards a despecification of the instruments, materials and apparatuses specific to different arts, a convergence on a same idea and practice of art as a way of occupying a place where relations between bodies, images, spaces and times are redistributed.

The very expression 'contemporary art' testifies to this. What is attacked or defended under its name is by no means a common tendency that would serve to characterize the various arts of today. Of all the arguments put forward with respect to it, virtually no references are made to music, literature, cinema, dance or photography. Almost all of them bear instead on an object definable as that which succeeds to the place of painting, i.e. the arrangements of objects, the photographs, the video apparatuses, the computers – and sometimes even the performances – that occupy the spaces on whose walls portraits were previously to be seen. It would be wrong, however, to criticize these arguments for their 'partiality'. Indeed, 'art' is not the common concept that unifies the different arts. It is the *dispositif* that renders them visible. And 'painting' is not merely the name of an art. It is the name of a system of presentation of a form of art's visibility. Properly speaking, 'contemporary art' is a name for that *dispositif* which has taken the same place and function.

What the term 'art' designates in its singularity is the framing of a space of presentation by which the things of art are identified as such. And what links the practice of art to the question of the common is the constitution, at once material and symbolic, of a specific space–time, of a suspension with respect to the ordinary forms of sensory experience. Art is not, in the first instance, political because of the messages and sentiments it conveys concerning the state of the world. Neither is it political because of the manner in which it might choose to represent

society's structures, or social groups, their conflicts or identities. It is political because of the very distance it takes with respect to these functions; because of the type of space and time that it institutes, and the manner in which it frames this time and peoples this space. Indeed, the figure I referred to above today suggests two sorts of transformation of this political function. In the aesthetics of the sublime, the space–time of a passive encounter with 'the heterogeneous' sets up a conflict between two different regimes of sensibility. In 'relational' art, the construction of an undecided and ephemeral situation enjoins a displacement of perception, a passage from the status of spectator to that of actor and a reconfiguration of places. In both cases, the specificity of art consists in bringing about a refraining of material and symbolic space. And it is in this way that art bears upon politics.

Politics, indeed, is not the exercise of, or struggle for, power. It is the configuration of a specific space, the framing of a particular sphere of experience, of objects posited as common and as pertaining to a common decision, of subjects recognized as capable of designating these objects and putting forward arguments about them. Elsewhere, I have tried to show the sense in which politics is the very conflict over the existence of that space, over the designation of objects as pertaining to the common and of subjects as having the capacity of a common speech. Man, said Aristotle, is political because he possesses speech, a capacity to place the just and the unjust in common, whereas all the animal has is a voice to signal pleasure and pain. But the whole question, then, is to know who possesses speech and who merely possesses voice. For all time, the refusal to consider certain categories of people as political beings has proceeded by means of a refusal to hear the words exiting their mouths as discourse. The other way consists in the simple observation of their material incapacity to occupy the space–time of political things – as Plato put it, artisans have time for nothing but their work. Of course this 'nothing', which they have no time to do, is to be at the people's assembly. Their 'absence of time' is actually a naturalized prohibition written into the very forms of sensory experience.

Politics occurs when those who 'have no' time take the time necessary to front up as inhabitants of a common space and demonstrate that their mouths really do emit speech capable of making pronouncements on the common which cannot be reduced to voices signalling pain. This distribution and redistribution of places and identities, this apportioning and reapportioning of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, and of noise and speech constitutes what I call the distribution of the sensible.[1] Politics consists in reconfiguring the distribution of the sensible which defines the common of a community, to introduce into it new subjects and objects, to render visible what had not been, and to make heard as speakers those who had been perceived as mere noisy animals. This work involved in creating dissensus informs an aesthetics of politics that operates at a complete remove from the forms of staging power and mass mobilization which Benjamin referred to as the 'aestheticization of politics'.

More precisely, then, the relationship between aesthetics and politics consists in the relationship between this aesthetics of politics and the 'politics of aesthetics' – in other words in the way in which the practices and forms of visibility of art themselves intervene in the distribution of the sensible and its reconfiguration, in which they distribute spaces and times, subjects and objects, the common and the singular. Utopia or otherwise, the task that the philosopher attributes to the 'sublime' painting of the abstract painter, hung in isolation on a white wall, or that which the exhibition curator gives to the installation or intervention of the relational artist, both register the same logic: that of a 'politics' of art which consists in suspending the normal coordinates of sensory experience. One valorizes the solitude of a heterogeneous sensible form, the other the gesture that draws a common space. But these two different ways of relating the constitution of a material form and that of a symbolic space are perhaps two strands of the same originary configuration, namely that which links the specificity of art to a certain way of being of the community.

This means that art and politics do not constitute two permanent, separate realities whereby the issue is to know whether or not they ought to be set in relation. They are two forms of distribution of the sensible, both of which are dependent on a specific regime of identification. There are not always occurrences of politics, although there always exist forms of power. Similarly, there are not always occurrences of art, although there are always forms of poetry, painting, sculpture, music, theatre and dance. That art and politics are perfectly conditional in character is shown in Plato's *Republic*. The famous exclusion of poets is often interpreted as the mark of a political proscription of art. However, the Platonic gesture also proscribes politics. One and the same distribution of the sensible both excludes artisans from the political scene where they might do *something other* than their work *and* prohibits poets from getting on the artistic stage where they might assume a character *other* than their own. Theatre and assembly: these are two interdependent forms of the same distribution, two spaces of heterogeneity that Plato was obliged to repudiate at the same time in order to constitute his Republic as the organic life of the community.

Art and politics are thereby linked, beneath themselves, as forms of presence of singular bodies in a specific space and time. Plato simultaneously excludes both democracy and theatre so that he can construct an ethical community, a community without politics. Today's debates about what ought to occupy museum space perhaps reveal a further form of solidarity between modern democracy and the existence of a specific space: that is, no longer the gathering of crowds around theatrical action, but instead the silent space of the museum in which the solitude and the passivity of passers-by encounter the solitude and passivity of artworks. Art's situation today might actually constitute one specific form of a much more general relationship that exists between the autonomy of the spaces reserved for art and its apparent contrary: art's involvement in constituting forms of common life.

In order to understand this apparent paradox, in which the politicity of art is tied to its very autonomy, it pays to take a quick trip back in time to one of the first formulations of the politics inherent to the aesthetic regime of art. At the end of the fifteenth of his letters published as *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* in 1795, Schiller invented an exhibition scenario which allegorizes a particular status of art and its politics.[2] He sets us in imagination before a Greek statue known as the *Juno Ludovisi*. This statue, he says, is a 'free appearance'; it is self-contained. To a modern ear this expression tends to evoke the *self-containment* celebrated by Clement Greenberg. But Schiller's 'self-containment' proves to be somewhat more complicated than the modernist paradigm, which seeks to emphasize the work's material autonomy. At issue here is not to affirm the artist's unlimited power of creation, nor to demonstrate the powers specific to a particular *medium*. Or instead: the *medium* at issue is not the matter on which the artist works. It is a sensible milieu, a particular sensorium, foreign to the ordinary forms of sensory experience. But this sensorium is identical neither with the eucharistic presence of the *voici* nor with the sublime flash of the Other. What the 'free appearance' of the Greek statue manifests is the essential characteristic of divinity, its 'idleness' or 'indifferency'. The specific attribute of divinity is not to want anything, to be liberated from the concern to give oneself ends and to have to realize them. And the artistic specificity of the statue inheres in its participation in that 'idleness', in this absence of volition. Standing before the idle goddess, the spectator is, too, in a state that Schiller defines as that of 'free play'.

While 'free appearance' tends at first to evoke the autonomy dear to modernism, 'free play' is at first more flattering to postmodern ears. We know the place that the concept of play occupies in the propositions and justifications of contemporary art. It figures as a way to distance oneself from modernist belief in the radicality of art and in its powers to transform the world. The ludic and the humorous are, practically everywhere, credited as characterizing a kind of art presumed to have absorbed its contraries: on the one hand, the gratuitousness of amusement

and critical distance; and, on the other, popular entertainment and the situationist *dérive*. Yet Schiller's staging could not place us at a greater distance from this disenchanted vision of play. Play is, Schiller tells us, the very humanity of man: 'Man is only fully a human being when he plays.'[3] And he goes on to declare that this apparent paradox is 'capable of bearing the whole edifice of the art of the beautiful and of the still more difficult art of living'. How to understand that the 'gratuitous' activity of play can simultaneously found the autonomy of a specific domain of art *and* the construction of forms for a new collective life?

Let us begin at the beginning. To establish the edifice of art means to define a certain regime for the identification of art, that is to say a specific relationship between the practices, forms of visibility and modes of intelligibility that enable us to identify the products of these latter as belonging to art or to *an* art. One and the same statue of a goddess may or may not be art, or may be art differently depending on the regime in which it is apprehended. In the first place, there is a regime in which such a statue is exclusively apprehended as an *image* of divinity. Perceptions of it and the concomitant judgements thus get subsumed under questions such as: is it possible to form images of divinity?; is the depicted divinity a genuine divinity?; if so, is it depicted as it should be? In this regime, there is properly speaking no art as such but instead images that are judged in terms of their intrinsic truth and of their impact on the ways of being of individuals and of the collectivity. This is why I have proposed that this regime, in which art enters into a zone of indistinction, be referred to as an ethical regime of images.

Next, there is a regime that frees the stone goddess from judgements about the validity of the divinity that is figured and the faithfulness of the depiction. This regime places statues of goddesses and stories of princes alike in a specific category, that of imitations. The *Juno Ludovisi*, then, becomes the product of an art, namely sculpture, a name which it merits for two reasons: first, because it imposes a form on a specific matter; and second, because it is the realization of a representation – the constitution of a plausible appearance that combines the imaginary traits of divinity with the archetypes of femininity, and the monumentality of the statue with the expressiveness of a particular goddess endowed with the traits of a specific character. The statue is a 'representation'. It is viewed through an entire grid of expressive conventions that determine the way in which the sculptor's skill in giving form to raw material is brought to coincide with the artistic capacity of rendering the appropriate figures according to the appropriate forms of expression. I call this regime of identification the representative regime of arts.

Schiller's *Juno Ludovisi*, as well as Barnett Newman's *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* and the installations and performances of relational art, belong to a different regime, which I call the aesthetic regime of art. In this regime, the statue of Juno does not draw its property of being an artwork from the conformity of the sculptor's work to an adequate idea or to the canons of representation. It draws it from its belonging to a specific sensorium. The property of being art refers back not to a distinction between the modes of doing, but to a distinction between modes of being. This is what 'aesthetics' means: in the aesthetic regime of art, the property of being art is no longer given by the criteria of technical perfection but is ascribed to a specific form of sensory apprehension. The statue is a 'free appearance'. It stands thus in a twofold contrast to its representative status: it is not an appearance drawn from a reality that would serve as its model. Nor is it an active form imposed on passive matter. As a sensory form, it is heterogeneous to the ordinary forms of sensory experience that these dualities inform. It is given in a specific experience, which suspends the ordinary connections not only between appearance and reality, but also between form and matter, activity and passivity, understanding and sensibility.

It is precisely this new form of distribution of the sensible that Schiller captures with the term 'play'. Minimally defined, play is any activity that has no end other than itself, that does not intend to gain any effective power over things or persons. This traditional sense of play was systematized in

the Kantian analysis of aesthetic experience, which in effect is characterized by a twofold suspension: a suspension of the cognitive power of understanding that determines sensible givens in accordance with its categories; and a correlative suspension of the power of sensibility that requires an object of desire. The 'free play' of the faculties – intellectual and sensible – is not only an activity without goal; it is an activity that is equal to inactivity. From the outset, the 'suspension' that the player enacts, as compared with ordinary experience, is correlated to another suspension, namely the suspension of his own powers before the appearance of the 'idle' work, the work which, like the goddess, owes its unprecedented perfection to the fact that the will is withdrawn from its appearing. In sum, the 'player' stands and does nothing before the goddess, who herself does nothing, and the sculptor's work itself becomes absorbed within this circle of an inactive activity.

Why does this suspension simultaneously found a new art of living, a new form of 'life-in-common'? In other words, how does it happen that a certain 'politics' is consubstantial with the very definition of the specificity of art in this regime? The response, in its most general form, can be stated as follows: because it defines that which comes within the province of art through its adherence to a sensorium different to that of domination. In the Kantian analysis, free play and free appearance suspend the power of form over matter, of intelligence over sensibility. Schiller, in the context of the French Revolution, translates these Kantian philosophical propositions into anthropological and political propositions. The power of 'form' over 'matter' is the power of the class of intelligence over the class of sensation, of men of culture over men of nature. If aesthetic 'play' and 'appearance' found a new community, then this is because they stand for the refutation, within the sensible, of this opposition between intelligent form and sensible matter which, properly speaking, is a difference between two humanities.

It is here that the notion according to which man is fully human only when he plays takes on its meaning. Play's freedom is contrasted to the servitude of work. Symmetrically, free appearance is contrasted to the constraint that relates appearance to a reality. These categories – appearance, play, work – are the proper categories of the distribution of the sensible. What they in fact describe are the forms of domination and of equality operative within the very tissue of ordinary sensory experience. In the Platonic Republic, the mimetician is as much deprived of the power of 'free appearance' as the artisan is of the possibility to engage in free play. There exists no appearance without a reality that serves to judge it, no gratuity of play compatible with the seriousness of work. These two prescriptions are strictly linked to each other and together define a partition of the sensible that at once excludes both art and politics, and makes way for the direct ethical guidance of the community. More generally, the legitimacy of domination has always rested on the evidence of a sensory division between different humanities. Earlier I quoted Voltaire's assertion that the common people are deemed not to have the same sense as refined people. The power of the elite here is thus the power of educated senses over that of unrefined senses, of activity over passivity, of intelligence over sensation. The forms of sensory experience themselves were charged with identifying differences in function and place with differences in nature.

What aesthetic free appearance and free play challenge is the distribution of the sensible that sees in the order of domination a difference between two humanities. Both notions manifest a freedom and an equality of sense [*sentir*] which, in 1795, stood in stark contrast to those that the French Revolution's 'reign of the Law' strived to embody. The reign of the Law, in effect, still amounts to the reign of free form over slavish matter, of the State over the masses. The Revolution turned to terror, in Schiller's view, because it still adhered to the model according to which an active intellectual faculty constrains passive sensible materiality. The aesthetic suspension of the supremacy of form over matter and of activity over passivity makes itself thus into the principle of a more profound revolution, a revolution of sensible existence itself and no longer only of the forms of State.

It is therefore as an autonomous form of experience that art concerns and infringes on the political division of the sensible. The aesthetic regime of art institutes the relation between the forms of identification of art and the forms of political community in such a way as to challenge in advance every opposition between autonomous art and heteronomous art, art for art's sake and art in the service of politics, museum art and street art. For aesthetic autonomy is not that autonomy of artistic 'making' celebrated by modernism. It is the autonomy of a form of sensory experience. And it is that experience which appears as the germ of a new humanity, of a new form of individual and collective life.

Thus there is no conflict between the purity of art and its politicization. The two centuries that separate us from Schiller testify to the contrary: it is by dint of its purity that the materiality of art has been able to make of itself the anticipated materiality of a different configuration of the community. If the creators of pure forms of so-called abstract painting were able to transform themselves into the artisans of a new Soviet life, it is not by virtue of some circumstantial subordination to an extrinsic utopia. What the non-figurative purity of the canvas – its gaining of planarity over three-dimensional illusion – did not signify was what one has strived to make it signify: pictorial art's exclusive concentration on its material. It marked, on the contrary, the belonging of the new pictorial gesture to a surface/interface where pure art and applied art, functional art and symbolic art, merged, where the geometry of the ornament became the symbol of inner necessity and where the purity of the line became the constitutive instrument for a new décor for living [*la vie*], itself susceptible to being transformed into the décor of the new life. Even Mallarmé, the pure poet *par excellence*, assigned to poetry the task of organizing a different topography of common relations, of preparing the 'festivals of the future'.

There is no conflict between purity and politicization. But we must take care to understand what 'politicization' means. What aesthetic education and experience do not promise is to support the cause of political emancipation with forms of art. Their politics is a politics that is peculiar to them, a politics which opposes its own forms to those constructed by the dissensual interventions of political subjects. Such a 'politics', then, actually ought to be called a metapolitics. In general, metapolitics is the thinking which aims to overcome political dissensus by switching scene, by passing from the appearances of democracy and of the forms of the State to the infra-scene of underground movements and the concrete energies that comprise them. For more than a century, Marxism has represented the ultimate form of metapolitics, returning the appearances of politics to the truth of the productive forces and relations of production, and promising, instead of political revolutions that merely bring about a change in the form of State, a revolution in the very mode of production of material life. But in itself the revolution of producers is conceivable only after a revolution within the very idea of revolution, in the idea of a revolution of the forms of sensible existence as opposed to a revolution of state forms. The revolution of producers is a particular form of aesthetic metapolitics.

There is no conflict between art's purity and this politics. But there is a conflict within purity itself, in the conception of this materiality of art which prefigures another configuration of the common. Mallarmé attests to this also: on the one hand, the poem has the consistency of a heterogeneous sensory block – it is a volume closed on itself, materially refuting the newspaper's 'unaltered' space and 'uniform casting of ink'; on the other, the poem has the inconsistency of a gesture which dissipates in the very act of instituting a common space, similar to a national holiday fireworks display. It is a ceremonial of the community, comparable with ancient theatre or the Christian mass. On the one hand, then, the collective life to come is enclosed in the resistant volume of the artwork; on the other, it is actualized in the evanescent movement which outlines a different common space.

If there is no contradiction between art for art's sake and political art, this is perhaps because the contradiction is lodged more deeply, in the very core of aesthetic experience and its 'education'. On this point, once again, Schiller's text clarifies the logic of an entire regime for identifying art and its politics, that which is conveyed today by the contrast between a sublime art of forms and a modest art of behaviours and of relations. The scenario in Schiller's work permits us to see how these two opposites are contained in the same initial kernel. On the one hand, indeed, free appearance is the power of a heterogeneous sensible element. The statue, like the divinity, holds itself opposite the – idle – subject, in other words it is foreign to all volition, to every combination of means and of ends. It is closed on itself, that is to say inaccessible for the thought, desires and ends of the subject contemplating it. And it is only by this strangeness, by this radical unavailability, that it bears the mark of man's full humanity and the promise of a humanity to come, one at last in tune with the fullness of its essence. This statue, which the subject of aesthetic experience cannot in the least possess, promises the possession of a new world. And aesthetic education, as the compensation for political revolution, is the education received through the strangeness of free appearance, through the experience of non-possession and passivity that it imposes.

However, from another angle, the statue's autonomy pertains to the mode of life that is expressed in it. The attitude of the idle statue, its autonomy, is in effect a result: it is the expression of the comportment of the community whence it issues. It is free because it is the expression of a free community. Only, the meaning of this freedom is inverted: a free, autonomous community is a community whose lived experience is not divided into separate spheres, which has no experience of any separation between everyday life, art, politics and religion. In this logic, the Greek statue is art for us because it was not art for its author, because, in sculpting it, this author was not making an 'artwork' but translating into stone the shared belief of a community, identical with its very way of being. What the suspension of free appearance thus promises is a community that is free insofar as it, too, no longer experiences these separations, no longer experiences art as a separate sphere of life.

Hence, the statue carries political promise because it is the expression of a specific distribution of the sensible. But this distribution can be understood in two opposite ways, depending on how the experience is interpreted: on the one hand, the statue is a promise of community because it is art, because it is the object of a specific experience and thereby institutes a specific, separate common space; on the other, it is a promise of community because it is not art, because all that it expresses is a way of inhabiting a common space, a way of life which has no experience of separation into specific realms of experience. Aesthetic education is therefore the process that transforms the solitude of free appearance into lived reality and changes aesthetic idleness into the action of a living community. The very structure of Schiller's *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* testifies to this shift in rationalities. Where the first and second parts of his work insist on the appearance's autonomy and the necessity of protecting material 'passivity' from the undertakings of imperious understanding, the third, conversely, describes a process of civilization in which aesthetic enjoyment amounts to a domination of human volition over a matter that it contemplates as the reflection of its own activity.

The politics of art in the aesthetic regime of art, or rather its metapolitics, is determined by this founding paradox: in this regime, art is art insofar as it is also non-art, or is something other than art. We therefore have no need to contrive any pathetic ends for modernity or imagine that a joyous explosion of postmodernity has put an end to the great modernist adventure of art's autonomy or of emancipation through art. There is no postmodern rupture. There is a contradiction that is originary and unceasingly at work. The work's solitude carries a promise of emancipation. But the fulfilment of that promise amounts to the elimination of art as a separate reality, its transformation into a form of life.

On the basis of this fundamental nucleus, therefore, aesthetic 'education' splits into two figures, as witnessed in the sublime nudity of the abstract work championed by the philosopher and in the propositions for new and interactive types of relationship proposed by the artist and today's exhibition curator. On the one hand, there is a project for aesthetic revolution in which art, by effacing its difference as art, becomes a form of life. On the other, there is the resistant figure of the work in which political promise is negatively preserved, not only through the separation between artistic form and other forms of life, but also through the inner contradiction of this form itself.

The scenario depicted by aesthetic revolution is one that proposes to transform aesthetics' suspension of the relations of domination into the generative principle for a world without domination. This proposition entails an opposition between two types of revolution: against political revolution *qua* revolution of State in which the separation between two humanities is *de facto* renewed, it asserts revolution *qua* formation of a community of sense [*sentir*]. This succinct formula sums up the famous text written together by Hegel, Schelling and Hölderlin, namely *Das älteste Systemprogramm des Deutschen Idealismus*.[4] In this programme a contrast is made between the dead mechanism of state and the living power of the community nourished by the sensible embodiment of its idea. This opposition between death and life is too simple and in fact enacts a twofold elimination. On the one hand, it causes the 'aesthetics' of politics to vanish, i.e. the practice of political dissensuality, promulgating in its stead the formation of a 'consensual' community, not a community in which everyone is in agreement, but one that is realized as a community of feeling. But for this to occur, 'free appearance' must be transformed into its contrary, that is the activity of a conquering human mind that eliminates the autonomy of aesthetic experience, transforming all sensible appearance into the manifestation of its own autonomy. The task of 'aesthetic education' advocated by *Das älteste Systemprogramm* is to render ideas sensible, to turn them into a replacement for ancient mythology; in other words, into a living tissue of experiences and common beliefs in which both the elite and the people share. The 'aesthetic' programme, therefore, is essentially a metapolitics; which proposes to carry out, in truth and in the sensible order, a task that politics can only ever accomplish in the order of appearance and form.

We know: not only did this programme define an idea of aesthetic revolution but also an idea of revolution *tout court*. Without having had the chance to read that forgotten draft, Marx came, half a century later, to transpose it precisely into the scenario of a revolution that is no longer political but human, a revolution that, once more, is supposed to realize philosophy by eliminating it and giving to man the possession of that which he had formerly only ever had the appearance. By the same token, what Marx proposed was a new and enduring identification of aesthetic man: namely, productive man, the one who at once produces both the objects and the social relationships in which they are produced. This identification formed the basis on which a juncture emerged between the Marxist vanguard and the artistic avant-garde in the 1920s, since each side adhered to the same programme: the joint elimination of political dissensuality and aesthetic heterogeneity in the construction of forms of life and of edifices for the new life.

It is nevertheless too simple to reduce this figure of aesthetic revolution to 'utopian' and 'totalitarian' catastrophe. The project of 'art become life' is not limited to the programme of the 'elimination' of art, announced some time ago by constructivist engineers and the suprematist or futurist artists of the Soviet revolution. It is consubstantial with the aesthetic regime of art. It already inspired, in their dreams of the artisanal and communitarian Middle Ages, the artists of the Arts and Crafts movement. It was taken up again by the artisans of the Art Deco movement, hailed in their time as producers of 'social art',[5] as it was by the engineers and architects of the Werkbund and the Bauhaus, before again flowering into the utopian projects of situationist urbanists and Joseph Beuys' 'social plastic'. But it also haunts those Symbolist artists reputed to

be as far from revolutionary projects as is possible. Notwithstanding their differences, the 'pure' poet Mallarmé and the engineers of the Werkbund share the idea of an art which, by suppressing its singularity, is able to produce the concrete forms of a community that has finally dispensed with the appearances of democratic formalism.[6] Here, there is no chant coming from totalitarian sirens, but simply the manifestation of a contradiction, that pertaining to the metapolitics rooted in the very status of the aesthetic work itself, in the original knot it implies between the singularity of the 'idle' appearance and the act that transforms appearance into reality. Aesthetic metapolitics cannot fulfil the promise of living truth that it finds in aesthetic suspension except at the price of revoking this suspension, that is of transforming the form into a form of life. In this regard, we might think of the contrast made by Malevich in 1918 between Soviet construction and museum works. We might think of the endeavour to design integrated spaces in which painting and sculpture are no longer manifest as separate objects but directly projected into life, thus eliminating art as 'something that is distinct from our surrounding milieu, which is the veritable plastic reality'.[7] Or again we might think of the urban *dérive* and type of play that Guy Debord brought to bear against the totality of Capitalist or Soviet life, alienated in the form of the king-spectacle.[8] In all these cases, the politics of the free form demands that the work realize itself; that it eliminate itself in act, that it eliminate the sensible heterogeneity which founds aesthetic promise.

The other great form of 'politics' specific to the aesthetic regime of art is precisely the one that refuses an elimination of form in act, namely the politics of the resistant form. In such a politics, form asserts its politicity by distinguishing itself from every form of intervention into the mundane world. Art does not have to become a form of life. On the contrary, it is in art that life takes its form. The Schillerian goddess carries promise because she is 'idle'. 'The social function of Art,' as Adorno will echo, 'is to not have one.' Egalitarian promise is enclosed in the work's self-sufficiency, in its indifference to every particular political project and in its refusal to get involved in decorating the mundane world. It is owing to this indifference that, in the middle of the nineteenth century, that work about nothing, that work 'supported on itself' written by the aesthete Flaubert, was straightaway perceived by the contemporary advocates of the hierarchical order as a manifestation of 'democracy'. The work that desires nothing, the work without any point of view, which conveys no message and has no care either for democracy or for anti-democracy, this work is 'egalitarian' by dint of its very indifference, by which it suspends all preference, all hierarchy. It is subversive, as subsequent generations would discover, by dint of its radical separation of the sensorium of art from that of everyday aestheticized life. A contrast is thereby formed between a type of art that makes politics by eliminating itself as art and a type of art that is political on the proviso that it retains its purity, avoiding all forms of political intervention.

It is this form of politicity, tied to the work's very indifference, that a whole political avant-gardist tradition came to internalize. The tradition strove to bring together political avant-gardism and artistic avant-gardism by their very distance. Its programme is encapsulated in a rallying cry: protect the heterogeneity of the sensible that forms the core of art's autonomy and *therefore* constitutes its potential for emancipation. Save it from a twofold threat: from its transformation into a metapolitical act and from its assimilation into the forms of aestheticized life. It is this demand that is encapsulated in Adorno's aesthetics. The work's political potential is associated with its radical separation from the forms of aestheticized commodities and of the administered world. But this potential does not reside in the simple solitude of the work, no more than it does in the radicality of artistic self-affirmation. The purity that this solitude authorizes is the purity of internal contradiction, of the dissonance by which the work testifies to the non-reconciled world. The autonomy of the Schoenbergian work, as conceptualized by Adorno, is in fact a twofold

heteronomy: in order to denounce the capitalist division of work and the embellishments of commodities effectively, the work has to be even more mechanical, more 'inhuman' than the products of mass capitalist consumption. But, in its turn, this inhumanity causes the stain of the repressed to appear, thus disturbing the autonomous work's beautiful technical arrangement by recalling that which founds it: the capitalist separation of work and enjoyment.

In this logic, the promise of emancipation is retained, but the cost of doing so entails refusing every form of reconciliation, or maintaining the gap between the dissensual form of the work and the forms of ordinary experience. This vision of the work's politicity brings with it a heavy consequence. It commands that aesthetic difference, guardian of the promise, be established in the sensorial texture of the work itself; and thereby it in a way reconstitutes the Voltairean opposition between two forms of sensibility. The diminished-seventh chords that enchanted the salons of the nineteenth century *can* no longer be heard, said Adorno, 'unless everything is deception'.[9] If our ears can still listen to them with pleasure, the aesthetic promise, the promise of emancipation, is proved a lie.

One day, however, we really must face up to the obvious fact that we can still hear them. And, similarly, we *can* see figurative and abstract motifs mixed on the same canvas, or make art by borrowing and re-exhibiting objects from ordinary life. Some would like to see in this the mark of a radical rupture whose proper name is postmodernity. But the notions of modernity and postmodernity misguidedly project, in the form of temporal succession, antagonistic elements whose tension infuses and animates the aesthetic regime of art in its entirety. This regime has always lived off the tension between contraries. The autonomy of aesthetic experience, which founds the idea of Art *qua* autonomous reality, is here accompanied by the elimination of all pragmatic criteria for extricating the domain of art from that of non-art, the solitude of the work from the forms of collective life. There is no postmodern rupture. But there is a dialectic of the 'apolitically political' work. And there is a limit at which its very project cancels itself out.

It is this limit of the autonomous/heteronomous work, political thanks to its very detachment from political will, to which the Lyotardian aesthetic of the sublime testifies. The task assigned to the artistic avant-garde still involves tracing a perceptible boundary that sets artworks apart from the products of commercial culture. But the very sense of this tracing is inverted. What the artist inscribes is no longer the promise-carrying contradiction, the contradiction of labour and enjoyment. The artist inscribes the shock of the *aistheton*, attesting to the mind's alienation from the power of an irremediable alterity. The work's sensible heterogeneity no longer vouches for the promise of emancipation. On the contrary, it comes to invalidate every such promise by testifying to the mind's irremediable dependency with regard to the Other inhabiting it. The work's enigma, which inscribed the contradiction of a world, becomes the pure testimony of the power of that Other.

Hence, the metapolitics of the resistant form tends to oscillate between two positions. On the one hand, it assimilates this resistance with the struggle to preserve the material difference of art apart from all the worldly affairs that compromise it: the commerce of mass exhibitions and cultural products by which it becomes a profit-making industrial enterprise; the pedagogy aiming to bring art closer to the social groups to whom it is foreign; and attempts to integrate art into a 'culture', further divided into various social, ethnic or sexual group cultures. Art thus takes up a combat against culture, instituting a frontline on one and the same side of which stand the defence of the 'world' against 'society', of works against cultural products, of things against images, of images against signs and of signs against simulacra. This denunciation can easily be incorporated into political attitudes that demand to re-establish a republican-style education to counter the democratic dissolution of forms of knowledge, behaviours and values. And it passes an overall negative judgement on contemporary restlessness, preoccupied with blurring the boundaries between art and life, signs and things.

But, at the same time, this jealously guarded art tends to become a mere testimony to the power of the Other and the risk of catastrophe continuously run by forgetting it. The trailblazers of the avant-garde become the sentinel that watches over the victims and keeps the memory of catastrophe alive. Here again, the politics of the resistant form accomplishes itself at the exact moment that it is cancelled out. It does so, no longer as part of a metapolitics of revolution of the sensory world, but by identifying the work of art with the ethical task of bearing witness, cancelling out, once again, both art and politics. This ethical dissolution of aesthetic heterogeneity goes hand-in-hand with a whole current of contemporary thought in which political dissensuality is dissolved into an archipolitics of the exception and in which all forms of domination, or of emancipation, are reduced to the global nature of an ontological catastrophe from which only a God can save us.

What we must therefore recognize both in the linear scenario of modernity and postmodernity, and in the academic opposition between art for art's sake and engaged art, is an originary and persistent tension between the two great politics of aesthetics: the politics of the becoming-life of art and the politics of the resistant form. The first identifies the forms of aesthetic experience with the forms of an other life. The finality it ascribes to art is to construct new forms of life in common, and hence to eliminate itself as a separate reality. The second, by contrast, encloses the political promise of aesthetic experience in art's very separation, in the resistance of its form to every transformation into a form of life.

This tension does not result from any unfortunate compromises art may have made with politics. These two 'politics' are in effect implicated in the same forms by which we identify art as the object of a specific experience. From this, however, it is by no means necessary to conclude that there has been a disastrous captation of art by 'aesthetics'. To repeat, there is no art without a specific form of visibility and discursivity which identifies it as such. There is no art without a specific distribution of the sensible tying it to a certain form of politics. Aesthetics is such a distribution. The tension between these two politics threatens the aesthetic regime of art. But it is also what makes it function. Isolating these opposed logics, and the extreme point at which both of them are eliminated, by no means obliges us to announce the end of aesthetics as others have the end of politics, of history or of utopias. But it can help us to understand the paradoxical constraints that weigh on the project, so apparently simple, of 'critical art', a project which arranges, in the form of the work, either an explanation of domination or a comparison between what the world is and what it might be.[10]

Translated by Steven Corcoran

Notes

1 J. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. and with intro. by Gabriel Rockhill, London and New York: Continuum, 2004 (French original, 2000).

2 Friedrich von Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967 (German original, 1795).

3 Ibid., p. 107.

4 Hegel, Schelling and Hölderlin, *The Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism*, ed. Ernst Behler, London and New York: Continuum, 1987 (German original, 1797).

5 Roger Marx, *L'Art social*, Paris: Eugène Fasquelle, 1913.

6 Concerning this convergence, I refer to my essay 'The Surface of Design', in *The Future of the Image*, London: Verso, 2007 (French original, 2003).

7 Piet Mondrian, 'L'art plastique et l'art plastique pur', in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art en théorie, 1900–1990*, Paris: Hazan, 1997, p. 420.

8 Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, New York: Zone Books, 1999 (French original, 1967); a film version was produced in 1973.
9 Theodor Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006 (German original, 1949).
10 This chapter and the following one [from Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents*] were both developed thanks to a seminar on *Aesthetics and Politics* held in May 2002 in Barcelona under the auspices of the Museu d'Art Contemporani. They are also indebted to a seminar held on the same subject in June 2001 at the *School for Criticism and Theory*, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

■ ■ ■

Bibliography – major works by Jacques Rancière in English

The Nights of Labor: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France (1981), trans. J. Drury, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.
The Philosopher and His Poor (1983), ed. A. Parker, trans. J. Drury, C. Oster, and A. Parker, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation (1987), trans. K. Ross, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.
On the Shores of Politics (1990), trans. L. Heron, London: Verso, 2007.
Short Voyages to the Land of the People (1990), trans. J. Swenson, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.
The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge (1992), trans. H. Melehy, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.
Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy (1995), trans. J. Rose, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
The Flesh of Words: The Politics of Writing (1998), trans. C. Mandell, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.
The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible (2000), trans. G. Rockhill, London: Continuum, 2004.
The Aesthetic Unconscious (2001), trans. D. Keates and J. Swenson, Cambridge: Polity, 2010.
Film Fables (2001), trans. E. Battista, Oxford: Berg, 2006.
The Future of the Image (2003), trans. G. Elliott, London: Verso, 2007.
Aesthetics and Its Discontents (2004), trans. S. Corcoran, Cambridge: Polity, 2009.
Hatred of Democracy (2005), trans. S. Corcoran, London: Verso, 2007.
Chronicles of Consensual Times (2005), trans. S. Corcoran, London: Continuum, 2010.
The Politics of Literature (2007), Cambridge: Polity, 2010.
The Emancipated Spectator (2008), trans. G. Elliott, London: Verso, 2009.
Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics, ed. and trans. S. Corcoran, London: Continuum, 2010.

Further reading

Davis (2010), Deranty (2010), and Rockhill (2004) provide introductions to Rancière's thought. For studies of his work on aesthetics and politics, see Blechman *et al*. (2005), Ferris (2009), Hinderliter *et al*. (2009), Rockhill (2004), Rockhill and Watts (2009), and Robson (2006). Chesney (2010) and Tanke (2009) offer comparisons respectively with Deleuze and Badiou, while Hewlett (2007) and May (2008, 2010) concentrate on his political philosophy. The implications of Rancière's ideas for education are addressed by Bingham and Biesta (2010) and Simons and Masschelein (2010).

C. Bingham and G. Biesta, *Jacques Rancière: Education, Truth, Emancipation*, London: Continuum, 2010.
M. Blechman, A. Chari, and R. Hasan, 'Democracy, dissensus, and the aesthetics of class struggle: an exchange with Jacques Rancière', *Historical Materialism*, 2005, vol. 13, pp. 285–301.
D. Chesney, 'Rancière, Deleuze and contemporary film aesthetics', *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, 2010, vol. 8, pp. 22–40.
O. Davis, *Jacques Rancière*, Cambridge: Polity, 2010.
J.-P. Deranty (ed.), *Jacques Rancière: Key Concepts*, Durham: Acumen, 2010.
D. Ferris, 'Politics after aesthetics: disagreeing with Rancière', *Parallax*, 2009, vol. 15, pp. 37–49.

N. Hewlett, *Badiou, Balibar, Rancière: Re-Thinking Emancipation*, London: Continuum, 2007.
B. Hinderliter, W. Kaizen, V. Maimon, J. Mansoor, and S. McCormick (eds), *Communities of Sense: Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.
T. May, *The Political Thought of Jacques Rancière: Creating Equality*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
———, *Contemporary Political Movements and the Thought of Jacques Rancière: Equality in Action*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.
M. Robson (ed.), *Jacques Rancière: Aesthetics, Politics, Philosophy: A Special Issue of Paragraph* (vol. 29), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.
G. Rockhill, 'Translator's introduction: Jacques Rancière's politics of perception', in J. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, London: Continuum, 2004, pp. 1–6.
G. Rockhill and P. Watts (eds), *Jacques Rancière: History, Politics, Aesthetics*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.
M. Simons and J. Masschelein (eds), *Rancière, Public Education and the Taming of Democracy*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
J.J. Tanke, 'Reflections on the philosophy and anti-philosophy of art: Badiou and Rancière', *Philosophy Today*, 2009, vol. 53, pp. 217–30.

Glossary

abjection Theorized by Julia Kristeva, the abject is the experience of being repelled or disgusted by the thing in front of us, e.g. the smell of rotting flesh or our lips touching the skin on the surface of milk. Abjection lets us see how everyday, symbolic understanding intersects with those experiences which have been deleted from acceptability. Focusing on the abject in art and literature lets us witness how objects at the boundaries of palatability and thinkability enter symbolic representation.

aesthetics The word has different meanings in the history of philosophy and, sometimes confusingly, all are in use today. The meanings can be grouped into three areas: (1) In ancient Greek philosophy, '*aisthesis*' refers to lived, felt experience, knowledge as it is obtained through the senses, in contrast to *eidos*, knowledge derived from reason and intellection, from which we get the word 'idea'. (2) In the eighteenth century, 'aesthetics' is applied to experiences of art and beauty by the German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten. The focusing of the term accompanies the emergence of the bourgeoisie, for whom questions of taste become expressions of their new class identity. This sense of the aesthetic also sheds light on the nature of modern, post-Cartesian subjectivity, and assists the nineteenth-century romantic notion that artistic experience enjoys an holistic relationship with nature which exceeds rules or prescriptive criteria. (3) The recent, critical meaning of 'aesthetics' originates in Kant's philosophy and is elaborated within the traditions which extend or challenge his thought. Artistic and sensory experience are understood to be implicated within and critical of all the 'hard', world-confronting regions of thought, e.g. epistemology, ethics, politics, ontology. On this understanding, experience is not something isolated and wholly subjective but something which is shaped or impinged upon by other interests or forces, and which has the capacity to resist, refract, or transform those interests and forces.

affect In general terms, 'affect' means 'emotion', 'feeling', 'passion', 'sentiment', and the force which can influence the mind or mood of another. In recent aesthetics, especially in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, the term has assumed importance because it denotes a mode of becoming whose (transient) identity is derived from its acting upon or being acted upon by another. It is a force or quality which, because of its dynamic, relational condition, exceeds the compartmentalization exercised by conventional philosophical distinctions, such as subject–object and mind–body, and allows modes of becoming normally excluded or overlooked – bodily, sensory, or other – to enter consideration.

aletheia The Greek concept of truth, and central to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. It can be loosely translated as 'disclosure' or 'the unconcealedness of beings'. It is a concept of truth distinct from and logically prior to the conventional, Roman notion of truth as *veritas*

or 'correspondence with the facts'. For there to be any objects to make up states of affairs to which our statements can correspond, there must be the 'truth' which lets these objects first come into being. Precisely what it means to think of truth as 'unconcealment' or 'disclosure' continues to be a subject of Heideggerian scholarship. For Heidegger, *aletheia* and Dasein (human being in the world) are fundamentally related, and the nature of this relationship is the focus of his major work, *Being and Time*.

alienation This can refer to the condition of being detached or estranged from society, or equally to the adoption of a critical, philosophical attitude towards the world. The term is most widely used within the critical theory tradition from Marx to Adorno, where it signifies the effect of capitalism on people's relationships with others and the world. Under capitalism, the worker is claimed to be 'alienated' from the product of their labour because, rather than having an outcome which is shared widely within the community, their efforts are sold as objects to make profit for the capitalist, the owner of the means of production.

a priori and **a posteriori** Latin terms meaning 'what comes before' and 'what comes after'. In philosophy, the terms are used to distinguish between kinds of concept, proposition, or argument based on whether or not experience is required in order to establish their truth or validity. An a priori proposition is one that can be known to be true without (or prior to) reference to experience, except for the fact that experience is necessary for understanding the terms, e.g. arithmetical statements such as '2 + 2 = 4' and tautologies, statements true by definition, such as 'all bachelors are unmarried'. In contrast, a posteriori propositions can be known to be true or false only by reference to experience. The terms were first used in philosophy during the scholastic period in the translation of Aristotle's theory of knowledge. The distinction between 'independent of experience' and 'dependent on experience' is central to disputes throughout the history of philosophy over the source of knowledge, particularly in the early modern contests between rationalism and empiricism. In the post-Kantian tradition, the distinction is vital to those projects which question the concept of experience as something *received by a subject*, and which seek to create an alternative structure or ontology for experience.

aura In Walter Benjamin's sense of the term, 'aura' refers to the embeddedness of an object, especially a work of art, in a particular time and place. It is a quality, Benjamin argues, which is stripped away through repeated mechanical reproduction of the artwork in photographs and magazines. There is something unique about encountering an object within its own particular physical and historical setting, yet mechanical reproduction gives us everything here and now. It nullifies the aura of natural and historical objects by bringing them closer, by effacing the relationships which locate an object and which make it the particular thing it is. However, for Benjamin, the loss of aura is a positive development, promoting new forms of art whose value lies not in their ceremonial role or their price but in what he terms their 'exhibition value', where what matters is not the *existence* of a work but the fact that it is *on view*. Mechanical reproduction can *bring to light* overlooked details of the commonplace and open up unimagined horizons for action, suggesting a new politicized mode of being for the human subject.

autopoiesis 'Autoproduction', from the Greek *poiesis* for 'production'. For Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, the authors who coined the term, the word refers to the productive dynamic created by a living being that is both *autonomous within* but also *dependent upon* its environment. The self-contradictory nature of this dynamic – how can something be both autonomous and dependent at the same time? – is valuable for theories seeking alternative, more complex, less reductive expressions of human being than those permitted by conventional binary metaphysics. Autopoiesis is the basis of Félix Guattari's new aesthetic paradigm. It

is a way of understanding art which allows it to encompass and respond to any aspect of any object or value with which it comes into contact. Although not his words, 'encompassing' and 'responding' are key moments in Guattari's ontology, part of the 'deterritorializing' process which chews up established and stable ways of thinking and forms of behaviour to develop new modes of becoming.

bare life (*homo sacer*) In Giorgio Agamben's philosophy, 'bare life' is the concept which is responsible for the thought (or thinkability) of a kind of life *distinct from the political*. It is the concept which allows distinctions between politicized and depoliticized life, such as between *bios* and *zoē*, to be formed in the first place. In his genealogy of the concept from antiquity to modernity, Agamben shows how bare life constitutes Western biopolitics through a double relation of inclusion and exclusion. *Homo sacer* is the first category of this kind historically: the notion from ancient Roman law of a person who cannot be sacrificed, because they are unworthy of the legal or moral status which sacrifice confers, yet who can be killed by anyone without punishment precisely because they are deemed to have no legal or moral status.

becoming 'Becoming' contrasts with 'being' in the history of metaphysics. The two terms refer to states of human or material existence. The idea that we can talk of the *being* of humans or things derives from a metaphysics which assigns existence to a stable, continuous, or underlying substrate, something which endures and remains as a fixed point through change. Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes adopt different versions of this approach. In contrast, things are said to exist in a state of becoming by those theories which reject the idea of an underlying substrate or a fixed reference point and instead adopt notions of flow, clustering, relation, or transition as their metaphysical coordinates. On this view, life is in a state of constant flux. Identities are transient, perpetually moving from one aspect to another. They might occur as moments of contact, competing forces, shifting intensities or concentrations, or relations between terms. The ontologies of Friedrich Nietzsche, Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari are some of the most explicit accounts of becoming in aesthetics, but theses to the effect that human nature and the world are relational and transformational, as opposed to essential, can also be found in phenomenology, critical theory, and feminist philosophy.

biopolitics The term 'biopolitics' is introduced by Michel Foucault in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality* (1976), and is used again in a lecture course he gave at the Collège de France in Paris in 1978–79, titled *Birth of Biopolitics*. According to Foucault, biopolitics emerges in the eighteenth century when the state becomes preoccupied with the problems created by phenomena associated with living beings organized as a population, such as health, hygiene, natality, longevity, and race. But the positioning of biopolitics as something which applies only to governmental or institutional practices has been criticized by Giorgio Agamben, who asserts that it has its origins in the way life is understood and incorporated within the political sphere in the West. Agamben's biopolitics urges a return to ontology in order to show how 'life' exists as a politically determined category within Western modernity.

bios As part of his account of the origins of the state in the *Politics*, Aristotle distinguishes between two kinds of life: *zoē* and *bios*. *Zoē* is natural, simple life which, for Aristotle, is assigned to the home, whereas *bios* is life that takes place within the public, political sphere of speech and action, and which creates and sustains social structures, including the state. Giorgio Agamben refers to the distinction in his account of bare life (*homo sacer*).

cathexis A prominent term in Sigmund Freud's account of the unconscious, 'cathexis' is a translation by James Strachey of the original German *Besetzung*, meaning 'filling' or 'occupation' (as by troops) or 'charge' (as in electrical charge). The translation is derived from

the Greek *catechein*, meaning 'to occupy'. Freud's use of the concept follows the positivist neurological discovery that the nervous system consists of chains of neurons, and the inference that mental processes correspond to material quanta. However, as his research leads him away from identifying traumas with particular neurological events to associating them with structures of meaning around events, his use of the term becomes more theoretical or even metaphorical, an abstract way of describing the extent to which ideas *occupy* the mind. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, a *neglected* line of thought is one which has '*not received*' cathectic energy, and a *repressed* idea is one from which cathexis 'has been *withdrawn*'.

critique and **critical theory** In a general sense, 'critical' means an examination of: how we use words and apply concepts; what we accept as the basis of our knowledge claims and the kind of support that is offered, e.g. how our claims and beliefs might rest upon or be challenged by prior or more fundamental assertions; and the values and criteria we use to validate or legitimize our claims. 'Critique' and 'critical' (in the 'critical theory' sense) have more specific meanings. 'Critique' is associated with Immanuel Kant's project – his critical philosophy – of establishing the conditions of possibility of experience, knowledge, morality, and judgment. In his first *Critique*, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he assesses the scope and limits of our cognitive powers, and seeks to demonstrate the possibility of knowledge within experience and the impossibility of knowledge beyond the limits of experience. This is a response to the scepticism of empiricist philosophy, which maintains that the only basis for the reliability of knowledge is custom, and to the dogmatic metaphysics of rationalism, which only admits God-given or clear and distinct ideas as knowledge. To be critical or to conduct a critique in a Kantian sense means to be attentive to how knowledge and experience in general (or in particular instances) are made possible by certain concepts, and what the limits of those concepts might be.

Critical theory, with its origins in Hegelian and Marxian philosophy, is 'critical' in a different sense. Eschewing the idealism of Hegel's philosophy but retaining the transformative potential of its dialectic, the Frankfurt School of critical theory seeks to challenge the alienating effect of rationality (which, it argues, mediates between capitalism, fascism, and Enlightenment thought), and to articulate a social epistemology to counter the positivistic and scientific model of truth as verification. The critical component here lies, following Marx, in the capacity of material conditions, through dialectical change, to generate ideas or forms of life which can stand as alternatives to established classes and divisions, and to restore awareness of our social, material context as that which provides the contingency and particularity necessary for resisting any dominating or totalizing force.

Dasein 'Dasein' is an everyday, colloquial German word meaning 'being there' or a human's sense of existence. Martin Heidegger uses the term to refer to human being as part of his departure from dualistic, Cartesian metaphysics and, in particular, the Cartesian concept of the human as an isolated subject which *confronts* a world, where that world is understood to be external to the subject. For Heidegger, human being is distributed in a way that dualistic, subject–object terminology cannot accommodate: a 'being there', an entity whose *being* is located and extended *in the world*. Making the human *located, extended, distributed*, no longer a 'thing', continues the Kantian tradition of holding the conditions of possibility of subjectivity and objectivity to be mutually defining. It also means that human being is unknowable as an object. The fact that our being is an issue for us, that we do not know who, or what, we are *because we are it*, this questioning being, is constitutive of Dasein. The later Heidegger wanted Dasein to be hyphenated, as 'Da-sein', to prevent the word being misinterpreted as referring straightforwardly to a thing, and to emphasize the uncanniness of the human. Despite this important relationship between typography and ontology, the convention of presenting 'Dasein' as an unhyphenated word continues in Heideggerian scholarship.

deconstruction Deconstruction is one of the most prominent and distinctive strategies of critique within poststructuralism. It is a form of textual analysis emerging from the work of literary theorists based at (or affiliated with) Yale University in Connecticut in the late 1960s and early 1970s, such as Harold Bloom, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey Hartman, and J. Hillis Miller, collectively known as the Yale School of Literary Criticism. Deconstruction continues the New Critical practice of exploring the echoes and associations which a close reading of a text can generate, but shifts attention to the way in which metaphors, turns of phrase, and distinctions adopted by the author can turn around and thwart her intention. Special significance is attached to binary oppositions in language, such as inner–outer, speech–writing, mental–physical, literal–metaphorical, etc. On the one hand, these enable the formation of value judgments by allowing one term to be elevated at the expense of its opposite but, on the other, as deconstructive readings show, the author's forthright, univocal assertion is often undermined when the underplayed term inadvertently reasserts itself. Deconstruction is not an analytical, reductive breakdown or 'destruction' of a text into its constituent claims but a form of writing which tries to acknowledge that, although operative metaphors and binarisms can be identified, they and the differential web of which they are a part nevertheless remain intact to reconstruct the critic's own claims. This goes some way to explaining the double-bind, 'take-apart-then-put-back-together' feel which the term has.

dialectic Dialectic is a form of argument originating in ancient Greek philosophy, exemplified by Plato's Socratic dialogues. Whereas rhetoric aims to convince through a long, continuous oration delivered by a single person, dialectic seeks to reach a conclusion through the contest between two or more views, through the exchange of argument and counter-argument, or proposition and counter-proposition. The conclusion might be the refutation of one or more points of view, a synthesis or combination of opposing ideas, or a shifting of viewpoints in the overall direction taken by the dialogue. Dialectic is given metaphysical status by Hegel when it is made the mechanism whereby human consciousness progresses from an individual, sensory condition to the state of Absolute Consciousness, the realization that mind and reality are one. The proposition–counter-proposition structure remains. The unfolding of consciousness, Hegel argues, is a cyclic, three-stage process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Uttering one judgment about an object (the thesis) makes the speaker aware that there is more to the object than her statement allows (the antithesis). A previously unrecognized or unconsidered aspect of the thing is brought to light, and so a revised judgment is made (a synthesis, which becomes the new thesis), and so the cycle continues. Following Hegel's use of the concept, dialectic is adopted by Marx as the structure of his philosophy, which comes to be known as dialectical materialism. Two key differences from Hegel are that the basis of human existence is not thought but practical, material activity or labour, and the contradictions to be overcome are divisions introduced by capitalism. Practical activity, Marx argues, brings the realization that the human world is a created world, a world in which we see *the labour of others* and where human intervention is a 'speaking to others'.

discourse Often used loosely (and some would say wrongly) to signify dialogue or language in general, 'discourse' more specifically refers to language in use within social, political, or cultural contexts, where its use displays a particular social order or is responsible for constructing social order. The concept represents the notion that instances of speech and writing do not issue from an innocent view-from-nowhere but embody and impose certain values, interests, and perspectives. For Foucault, discourse is tied to questions of power and propriety. For example, the way sex is talked about at the beginning of the eighteenth century turns what was formerly awkward or taboo into something ordered and rationalized on behalf

of administrations associated with labour capacity, medicine, and population. The idea that 'sex' is a biological given is challenged by Judith Butler on the grounds that it is first and foremost an object of discourse, including scientific discourse. This means that, discursively, 'sex' is not fixed, is not a description of 'what one is', but one of the norms by which the body becomes materialized, contoured, and defined within culture and society.

dromology Coined by Paul Virilio, 'dromology' refers to the logic or science or phenomenology of speed. It pays special attention to the ways in which the speed of production in high-resolution photographic imagery becomes the creation of desire. Far from being a mere representation of an object, the high-resolution photographic image expands the possibilities of advertising and, in the context of a billboard hoarding, becomes '*will*, the will to engage the future' in as much as people will seek out the object depicted (*The Vision Machine*, p. 64). *Objects perceive me*, Virilio asserts, because it is not just the image which has a high resolution; rather, resolution, the intention to act, has passed now to human reality.

écriture feminine Feminist writers and philosophers Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous both entertain the notion of an *écriture feminine* or 'feminine writing' which embodies a new, differential, and arguably 'tactile' approach to language. The importance given to the body by psychoanalysis as an object under interpretation is used by Irigaray to turn texts in the history of philosophy against themselves, drawing organic, textured language from arguments which outwardly try to suppress the epistemological significance of the body. The form and status of writing are paramount for Cixous. Primarily a novelist, she experiments with literary style and subverts the accepted conventions of narrative to restore materiality to the text and to generate new ways of representing physical, bodily experience. Julia Kristeva though avoids the notion of a feminine writing: it reaffirms the binary division between the masculine and the feminine, she claims, and, as such, only serves to reinforce patriarchy's commitment to essentialist, categorial thought.

embodiment This refers to the body retheorized in recent decades not in terms of the traditional, Cartesian mind–body split but as something central for understanding human being and culture. The shift in thinking has occurred not just in continental philosophy but in many areas within the humanities and the sciences; cognitive linguistics is an example of the latter. In opposition to the Cartesian view, which treats the body as a container or a thing external to the essential self, 'embodiment' signifies that human being is located in the world in and through the body. On this understanding, the body is not an object but a series of relations: we are bodily rooted and distributed in an environment; we are not isolated subjects confronting a world but a set of interactions – perceptual, conceptual, and emotional – with a wider setting, constantly acting on and being acted upon by that setting. As a series of relations, embodiment does not have a fixed set of meanings but is a site of definition and redefinition within social, political, and cultural discourses. It presents our being in such a way as to frustrate any conventional regime of categorization, and to invite, if not demand, new, alternative, possibility-generating forms of description. Part of this will involve our embodied condition having values and meanings imposed on it through discourse but, by the same token, it will also have the capacity to generate other, oppositional, redefining terms.

epistemology Epistemology is the philosophical theory of knowledge, examining: (1) the nature and scope of knowledge; (2) competing perspectives with regard to what this nature and scope might be, including what the limits of knowledge might be; (3) the grounds or conditions which make knowledge possible; (4) sceptical challenges against the possibility or even existence of knowledge; (5) the aesthetic, conceptual, and cognitive processes through which it is acquired; (6) distinctions between different kinds of knowledge; (7) the relation between knowledge and other

forms of conscious states and attitudes, such as belief, intuition, sensation; and (8) questions of how the nature and scope of knowledge are influenced by political, social, and bodily factors.

existentialism A branch of philosophy whose origins are attributed to nineteenth-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard but which is at its most influential in the twentieth century through the work of Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Existentialism is a philosophy of action and engagement. In opposition to Platonic and Cartesian theories of the human, existentialism maintains that there is no essence or soul underlying and sustaining the self. There is no primary ground of human being to which consciousness can turn for guidance in deciding upon a course of action. For Sartre, consciousness is being-*for-itself* because it can never be identical with a content, cause, or thing. Instead, the self is constructed through action, through its engagements with others. In the absence of an essential self, our interventions in the world become the traces of our identity. Aesthetics is important for existentialism in that art becomes a domain in which alternative forms of practice are exercised, and different forms of art are assessed for their ability to assist political action. A key question for existentialism is how theories of being, morality, and politics can be constructed in the absence of a central, essential, self-standing subject to which agency and responsibility can be attributed.

hermeneutics Originally defined, hermeneutics is the art of understanding and interpreting historical texts. In the history of hermeneutics, there are three phases: theological, romantic, and phenomenological. The first two are characterized by the intention to recover the 'true' meaning a text would have had in the age it was written, free from the mediation and distortion that translation and the passage of time bring. What distinguishes twentieth-century, phenomenological hermeneutics (represented in this volume by Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, and Vattimo) from its earlier forms is the recognition that the hermeneut, as an interpreter of texts, is herself rooted in history. As a result, any interpretation she gives of a text, no matter how 'close' she claims to be to identifying the conditions of its production, will always be mediated by the historically constructed assumptions and expectations which constitute her practice as a hermeneut. It is this appreciation of the necessarily perspectival nature of historical, textual interpretation which makes recent hermeneutic theory phenomenological.

heteroglossia 'Heteroglossia' (*raznorečie*) is arguably the most fundamental concept in Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogic discourse. It refers to language conceived as layered, competing discourses, each embodying an ideological-belief system or worldview. On this model, the speaking subject is not the source of meaning. Rather, her utterances are always 'double-voiced'. She has to negotiate a range of discourses, some (if not all) of which will already be active in the situation. Through this process, it is possible for an utterance to refract, add to, or even subtract from the multiplicity of meanings generated through stratification in order to arrive at a localized set of possibilities. This makes heteroglossia, in the words of Bakhtin, '*another's speech in another's language*, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way' (quoted from the section included in this *Reader*).

ideology In Marxism, ideology is a set of ideas which represents the interests of those with power in society, i.e. the property-owning classes, but which is nonetheless presented as natural, 'the way things are', so the interest-laden nature of the ideas is concealed. Acceptance by the proletariat that a set of ideas and the economic arrangements to which they give rise are natural, and even beneficial, is termed 'false consciousness' by Marx and Lukács. In modern Marxist thought, 'ideology' is taken to refer not just to economic and social class differences but to all belief systems and world views. The problem exists that if truth, naturalness, and

objectivity are ideology-specific, then there is no absolute truth or impartial point of reference outside ideology with which to challenge certain beliefs. Much of Slavoj Žižek's thought rallies against the perceived demotivating tendencies of relativizing, 'anything goes' postmodernism in order to find or create an ontological difference, something which can stand out and stand back from ideological systems as a critical vantage point.

imaginary In psychoanalysis, the 'imaginary' is one of the three registers (the others being 'symbolic' and 'real') in Jacques Lacan's Oedipal theory of the construction of subjectivity. Lacan distinguishes between the pre-Oedipal 'imaginary' and the post-Oedipal 'symbolic' stages in the development of a child's awareness. The imaginary is the period of transition from the child's not being able to distinguish where he ends and his mother begins to the realization that he is an object in the world among others. This shift in perception is brought about by the child recognizing a divide between the openness or incompleteness of his subjectivity and the outlined wholeness of his image in a mirror (the 'mirror stage'). However, the imaginary is not something which is over and done with in a matter of months. Instead, it remains with the individual throughout adulthood as the principle of wanting to identify oneself with an image. Because it is prior to the symbolic, the imaginary represents a domain of potential meaning that is prior to any knowledge of linguistic division and gender specificity. It is the manner in which the imaginary breaks through and disrupts the symbolic which interests Julia Kristeva. She adopts the term 'semiotic' to refer to the prelinguistic, generative aspect of the imaginary.

immanence In general terms, the word has two meanings: something's being inherent or indwelling, not requiring reference to an outside, and the *permeation* of the universe by a supreme being or metaphysical principle, as opposed to its existing transcendentally, outside the universe. The two meanings are strongly related in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. 'Immanence' describes their ontology of active formation in which identities (of beings, objects, ideas) are generated through a series of interacting differences, where identities take shape as expressions or intensities or folds within a plane of difference. Immanence is the plane of difference out of which identities form, and exists as a flow of perceptions that is prior to any carving up into individual perceivers. Deleuze and Guattari's dynamic ontology is a rejection of dualist metaphysics, which has binary, mind–world, or subject–object distinctions as its foundation. Influences include Baruch Spinoza, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Henri Bergson, all of whom offer worldviews in which human life is not ascribed to objects or regions but is instead articulated as a series of relations or concentrations. In critical theory, immanent criticism refers to the problem of criticizing ideology from within, on the understanding that recourse to an external, absolute truth is either impossible or simply the importation of another ideology.

inaesthetic Alain Badiou accuses traditional aesthetics of turning art into an object for philosophy, of reducing art to the terms of philosophy. In response, he proposes an inaesthetic philosophy of art which remains philosophical but allows the work of art to retain its independent existence. Inaesthetics purports to address the work of art philosophically but in a way which is nonetheless appropriate to art. This line of thinking is criticized by Rancière for assuming that there is something proper to art, and, if there is something proper to it, assuming that 'becoming an object for philosophy' means art cannot be addressed on its own terms.

life-world A term used by Edmund Husserl and Jürgen Habermas. In a general sense, 'life-world' signifies that human existence and experience are fundamentally social. We do not simply occupy a world populated by others; rather, the concepts and conditions we share with others are fundamental to, and prior to, the being we have as individuals; our condition in the life-world is one of intersubjectivity. Beyond this, the term has more specific and subtly different meanings

for Husserl and Habermas. In Husserl's phenomenology, 'life-world' can refer to (a) the beliefs which underlie the everyday attitude a subject has towards herself and the world, and (b) the structure of shared beliefs which defines a community. Habermas's concept occurs as part of his theory of communicative action and his attempt to demonstrate the conditions of possibility of consensual action. The life-world in this context is the shared background meanings and institutional practices which create the mutual understanding necessary for cooperation.

metaphor 'Metaphor' is customarily defined as the literary device in which one thing is described as something else, e.g. time is a river, architecture is frozen music, Juliet is the sun. It is distinct from simile in that simile draws attention to the fact that an unusual comparison is being drawn by including the word 'like', as in 'time is like a river'. Although only one word, the difference is highly significant. Without the 'drawing attention to' element, metaphor creates a category mistake (a combination of concepts which, taken literally, produces nonsense) which, it is argued, acts as a prompt to thought and a challenge to conventional categorization, implying that it operates at the most fundamental level of thought. When 'like' is used (in a simile), it suggests a more subterranean level of thought is called upon to make the comparison.

There has been a phenomenal growth of interest in metaphor as a subject of study in recent decades. While literature and the arts, as far back as Plato, have always recognized metaphor as a source of poetic meaning, this new interest in metaphor is part of a shift in thinking which asserts that the metaphorical creation of meaning holds significance for the way we understand the construction of knowledge and the world. Within contemporary aesthetics, metaphor has been examined within postmodern debates over the status of art and knowledge, and the way in which concepts of truth and objectivity are understood. The fact that key epistemological concepts have metaphors at their root, e.g. 'mirroring', 'correspondence', 'sense datum', is taken as evidence of the contingent, communal, subjective basis of knowledge. Also, because metaphor is dislocated or dislocating predication, combining concepts inappropriately, it is seen as a means of challenging the boundaries whereby one subject defines itself in relation to another. A text's use of metaphor is of particular interest to deconstruction, since metaphor's combination of inappropriate terms can introduce chains of meaning which turn around and counter the explicit intentions of the author.

Mitsein '*Mitsein*' is German for 'being with' or 'being with others'. The term is first granted philosophical significance by Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time*, but has recently been given additional weight by Jean-Luc Nancy, who accuses Heidegger of not paying sufficient attention to the concept. Although Heidegger acknowledges that *Mitsein* is an important part of Dasein, Dasein nevertheless remains for Heidegger a solitary mode of being. For Nancy, *Mitsein* is crucial because it asserts the ontological priority of community. Community comes first: individual being is made possible by shared structures of understanding, rather than community being the end product of already existing individuals coalescing. The fragmentary significance of *Mitsein* lies in the assertion that experience, meaning, and thought are never complete within any one consciousness, but always incomplete, always awaiting reaction and participation from others, but without any endpoint.

modern, modernism, modernity There are a number of different aspects to the modern. Principally, the term denotes the period in the history of ideas characterized by the development of man's self-image as an autonomous rational being, distinct from God who, through reason and sensory knowledge, is able to know and manipulate the world. The work of the French rationalist philosopher René Descartes is often cited as the threshold of modern thought. His *cogito* argument – 'I think, therefore, I am' – identifies the essence of the human being with reason and makes the material aspects of human life, i.e. the body, sensory experience, and the natural

world, subordinate to rational enquiry. 'Modernity' is the name given to the modern as it applies to culture and society and, as a period, is generally held to begin with the Industrial Revolution in the second half of the eighteenth century. Advances in engineering, the manipulation of materials, and mass construction allowed Western man to exert his influence on the world in an unprecedented way, and meant that human sensibilities began to confront an ever-increasing number of man-made objects and opportunities. Concrete form was thus given to the Cartesian model of the human being as an entity which surveys and acts upon the physical world.

Art and aesthetic experience are, of course, not exempt from these social and ontological changes, and the term 'modernism' is used to cover the period in the arts when composers, writers, artists, and performers react to and accommodate the dynamics of modernity. In this time, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, an interesting dialectic of reaction, appropriation, and subversion emerges between art and technology. On the one hand, from the mid-nineteenth century, artists begin to define their output in terms of what mechanical reproduction *is not*. Modern visual art, starting with impressionism, produces the kinds of image which photography cannot and, with modern literature, James Joyce introduces contingency and human, unconscious chance into the form of his writing as a response to the typewriter's mechanization of prose. However, on the other hand, it is the availability of these inventions and new possibilities that inspire and give context to the very reactions against them. The 'painted light' of impressionism cannot be divorced from the interest in light created by photography and contemporaneous studies in physics, and the typewriter becomes the machine which promotes unconscious, non-sentential 'automatic' writing.

objet petit a A term within Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis, left undefined by him. By remaining untranslated, he believes, it acquires the status of an algebraic sign or 'matheme'. This reflects the conviction, held in the last decade of his life, that the fundamental claims of psychoanalysis could be formalized mathematically. A definition is possible, however. '*Objet petit a*' denotes any specific thing which can become an object of desire. The '*a*' stands for '*autre*' (other) and '*petit a*' (small 'a') distinguishes the particular other from the '*Autre*' or '*grand Autre*' (the capitalized Other) which denotes the Hegelian, ontological condition of otherness in general.

Oedipal The Oedipus complex is one of the theories of psychosexual development identified by Sigmund Freud. Adapting the Greek myth of Oedipus, who inadvertently kills his father and marries his mother, Freud proposes a scenario in which the original, intimate relationship between boy-child and mother is broken when the child realizes that it has to compete with the father for his mother's affections. The three-way relationship between father, mother, and boy-child is used by Jacques Lacan as the basis for his theory of subjectivity, including the thesis that the unconscious is organized like a language. The use of the Oedipal structure as a theoretical model (for language or the development of subjectivity) has been criticized for making the experience of the male child a universal.

ontology Ontology is the study of what is real and, in particular, the nature of the units or relations which make up reality. One example of an ontological enquiry would be the study of existence in itself, independently of the nature of any existent object. Another ontological question would be: what is the basic unit of existence? The thing or the relation or the process? Is the human being an isolatable, circumscribable thing or a shifting but nonetheless sticky cluster of relations, where 'relations' might include, for example, perception as an exchange between my sensory faculties and the world, and thought as participation in a public web of meaning? It is also possible to talk of individual ontologies: the belief that there are independently existing things behind appearances which continue to exist in the absence of

an observer is an ontology. Recent work within aesthetics has taken an ontological turn (see, for example, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Alain Badiou, Jacques Rancière) in that it has become preoccupied with the 'shape' of thought. New models of thought are proposed, and reconfigurations are given of the contact which ideas have with other ideas, and the contact which ideas may or may not have with what is not 'conceptual' or beyond the 'conceptual'.

performativity This is the notion that speech and writing do not just describe the world but also act in it and help to make it. The first substantial formulation of the concept is in the speech act theory of analytic philosopher J.L. Austin, although the idea is present in Hume's account of promising in his *Treatise of Human Nature* (1740). Austin begins to explore performative utterances in his 1946 paper 'Other Minds'. A performative utterance, he declares, will not just involve saying words (what he calls the 'locutionary act') which have meaning (the 'rhetic act') but will also *do something* (the 'illocutionary act') which affects other people or causes effects in their lives (the 'perlocutionary act'). To say 'I promise' in an appropriate situation is itself the act of promising, the forging of a commitment, and not a statement about a promise. The concept is important for aesthetics in that it challenges correspondence theories which hold that meaning is based wholly on words signifying things, and introduces a dimension whereby speech and writing can be effective in the world over and above simply describing events. In different ways, the writings of Nietzsche, Adorno, Blanchot, Derrida, and Cixous are performative in that the form of their texts is just as important as the threads of meaning or claim-making within them. Language is used not so much as a linear conveyor of ideas but as a medium which, through transgression and manipulation, allows conventional thinking to be resisted, and the constructed nature of thought to become apparent. Peformativity is also integral to Judith Butler's work on gender. Gender is performative for her because it works with and within the discourses which construct 'sex'. The boundaries and values defining gender, she argues, are the results of processes of materialization which have become stabilized through time and which, therefore, are open to redefinition through alternative patterns of bodily gesture and action.

phallus While 'phallus' literally refers to the erect penis, the word has a much broader meaning within psychoanalytic theory. It indicates that it is not the male sexual organ in its biological reality which is the subject for psychoanalytic study, but its imaginary and symbolical function. For Jacques Lacan, the phallus is the origin of the process of signification, the point of reference which allows the chain of signification to occur; it is the 'privileged signifier' around which other signifiers, differences, and relative values are structured and organized. In the sense that a sign stands for something which is absent, the phallus is seen by Lacan as the sign that stands for the child's pre-Oedipal relationship with the mother which has been lost and, therefore, becomes representative of language in general. Because the phallus plays this pivotal role in Lacan's symbolic order, his psychoanalysis is accused by Luce Irigaray of being 'phallocentric' and therefore complicit in modes of thinking which repress women. The charge prompted Lacan to terminate Irigaray's lectureship at the University of Paris at Vincennes where the two had been working closely together.

phenomenology Phenomenology is the philosophy of experience. It focuses on experience as 'lived experience', i.e. prior to its being divided into subjective and objective components, and asserts that attention to lived experience allows for the formulation of worldviews and theories of being which can overcome the limitations and frustrations of binary metaphysics (thinking which tries to apportion value or essence to one side or the other in a pair of terms). The beginnings of phenomenology are most often identified with the work of the late nineteenth-, early twentieth-century German thinkers Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl, but the governing principles are arguably evident in Kant. Phenomenology maintains that

the categories with which philosophy has divided up experience in the past are not adequate to experience; they break up continuous experience into things, and let that sense of a lived point-of-contact between mind and reality slip away. Thus new perspectives on experience are offered but neither mind nor reality is taken as a foundation. Instead, the question of what it means to take experience 'on its own terms' is the starting point.

postmodernism 'Postmodernism' refers to the ideas and beliefs which emerge in response to modern thought. More specifically, postmodernism is a reaction against the excesses of modernism. It contests the model of an absolute, all-seeing reason, distinct from the contingencies of its physical environment and incapable of accommodating diversity, and is suspicious of all claims to universal truth. In response, it promotes recognition of the contingent, historical, constructed aspects of cultural practice. However, while it represents the restoration of materiality to thought, intention, and design, the postmodern is not a complete rejection of the modern. Such 'start-from-scratch' strategies only amount to placing confidence once again in ahistorical, clear, and distinct perception, and thus represent a forgetting of the past and all that should be learned from it.

poststructuralism While structuralism shows that meaning is a consequence of relationships internal to the medium of signification, *post*structuralism builds upon this internalism to challenge traditional notions of authorship, intention, meaning, and truth. It can be regarded as an extension of the disturbing and destabilizing effects which structuralism has on the traditional nomenclature belief that words give us the world. It contributes to postmodernism's reconceptualization and materialization of knowledge by drawing attention to the way in which concepts and ideas, through their own internal thickness, create meanings and possibilities that divert intention or expectation and exceed any claim to final truth. This furthers the political project of establishing plural, multivocal forms of representation. The poststructuralist text is often performative: its impact or affectability will come not only from *what is stated* but also from the *way it is stated*. Language ceases to be the tool we wield in order to manipulate the world and instead becomes something we have to grapple with, which can surprise or resist us.

purposiveness The indeterminate concept of nature's subjective purposiveness (*Zweckmäßigkeit*) is arguably the kingpin of Kant's entire critical philosophy. Purposiveness is the idea that the world appears to us *as if* it had been designed for our awareness. Kant's critical system is a philosophy of the 'going beyond': faculties located in the human subject are shown to extend beyond themselves to construct a world of appearances and to create the possibility of moral action. Kant turns to reflective judgments, those judgments where we reflect on our own cognitive powers, e.g. aesthetic and teleological judgments, to identify the conditions which make our 'going beyond' possible. We can 'go beyond', Kant argues, because the metaphysical substrates underlying moral and cognitive freedom within us and nature outside of us are bridged. Purposiveness is our indeterminate concept of the bridge between freedom and nature. Reflective judgment gives us a sense of this bridge because, when we are stopped in our tracks by a natural scene that impresses us or a work of art that stimulates us, the only concept which allows us to get a purchase on the event is purposiveness (all judgments require concepts in Kant's system). In aesthetic judgments, experiences of beauty or delight occur when we recognize that nature appears to display the order necessary for us to perceive it, or when a work of art depicts nature not in a painstaking or mimetic fashion but in a way which plays with and challenges our faculties (just as the complex but nonetheless fathomable order of nature does). For Kant, to experience beauty in art, or to be challenged by it, is to experience purposiveness.

real In psychoanalysis, the 'real' is one of the three registers (the others being 'symbolic' and 'imaginary') in Jacques Lacan's Oedipal theory of the construction of subjectivity. The 'real' for Lacan does not refer to reality in the traditional, philosophical sense of a mind-independent world, but rather signifies that which resists representation or eludes description. It cannot be attained by the symbolic or by the imaginary. We encounter the real when words fail us. A description which purports to convey the real symbolically will miss the mark, will lose the 'reality'. According to Sheridan, in his 'Translator's Introduction' to Lacan's *Écrits: A Selection*, the real 'can be approached but never grasped: it is the umbilical cord of the symbolic' (p. xii). However, Lacan considers the possibility that the imaginary might play a role in the subject's relation to the real in his twenty-third seminar, where he reflects on the capacity of James Joyce's writing style to rupture the lines which keep the real at a distance.

rhizome A rhizome is an underground stem that grows horizontally and pushes up lateral shoots. It is one of the principal figures at work in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's creation of a philosophy which does not repeat traditional 'tree-like' thought wherein individuals are attached to a concept or ideas are attached to a central thesis, like branches to a trunk. The theme of the first chapter in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), rhizomatic thought makes claims linked not by continuous, vertical progression, but by leaps of association and relations between seemingly unconnected ideas, promoting connections between the arts, sciences, and other social and institutional settings. This lateral connectivity promises to generate perceptions which can further the philosophical project of creating concepts, thereby expanding philosophy's vocabulary and furnishing thought with a complexity far richer than a linear, 'tree-like' thesis permits.

semiotics Semiotics (Peirce's term) or semiology (Saussure's term) is the study or science of signs. The subject has contemporaneous roots in the sign theory of Charles Sanders Peirce and the structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure. The structuralist approach has had the greater influence within continental aesthetics, but 'semiotics' has become the preferred label in English-speaking accounts. Semiotics, in both its Peircean and Saussurean guises, acknowledges that the objects and activities which occupy our lives do not occur with simple, transparent, universal meanings but rather are constituted by complex systems of signs. This applies not only to verbal language but to all forms of meaningful situations and practices, from architecture, fashion, and bodily comportment to the communicative behaviour of animals. Signification is shown not to be a straightforward relation between meaning and thing but the result of relationships between signs (paramount for Saussure), and the interpretation exercised by the interpretant (Peirce's term). In his book *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes shows how events and objects which pass for 'natural' or 'everyday' in cultural life are in fact constructed in accordance with certain ideological values, and hold meaning in virtue of being implicated within systems of thought. Julia Kristeva gives the 'semiotic' a distinct meaning, using it to denote the prelinguistic, generative capacity of the imaginary to disrupt the phallocentric conventions of symbolic thought.

simulacrum The term used by Jean Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulations* (1981) to address the nature and consequences of image- and media-saturation within advanced capitalist society. The term derives from the Latin *simulare*, meaning 'to simulate, to fake, to make an appearance of'. Image-saturation has reached a point, Baudrillard argues, where the conventional notion of 'images representing reality' no longer applies, and instead we now live in an image-world, with representations referring purely to one another. Simulations do not direct us to reality but constitute a hyperreality of their own, threatening (in the absence of any coordination with reality) to make political action or difference impossible.

structuralism Originating in the posthumously published *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, structuralism theorizes language as a web-like structure. In contrast to the traditional nomenclature theory of language which treats words as labels, structuralism asserts that meaning is a property of the internal, structural relationships each word has with the others in the web. There is nothing tree-like about the word 'tree'. There is no necessary correspondence between a signifier (the physical property of a sign, e.g. the sound or ink-pattern 'tree') and a signified (the concept or meaning we associate with the signifier). Their relationship is purely arbitrary. Saussure introduces the concept of 'linguistic value' to demonstrate that a word has meaning only because it is distinct from the other possible words which could be used; each part of the web is defined in terms of the other parts. For example, in the case of the near-synonyms 'to dread', 'to fear', and 'to be afraid', 'to dread' has its particular meaning or value because it isn't 'to fear', or 'to be afraid'. The impact of structuralism within the humanities has been immense. Meaning is shown to be differential, i.e. not to reside in single categories, and, because of its structural nature, to have an autonomy distinct from the intention of the author. In the 1960s and 1970s, theorists working in other subjects realized that their own fields of enquiry could be analysed structurally, e.g. Christian Metz in film theory, Claude Lévi-Strauss in anthropology, Michel Serres in the philosophy of science, and Roland Barthes in semiotics and cultural theory.

sublime The sublime is that which is beyond all comparison, measurement, or representation. The concept has been given subtly different meanings throughout the history of aesthetics. In classical thought, Longinus defines the sublime as the element in art which suggests something lies beyond the human condition and the empirical world. The sublime is distinguished from beauty in the eighteenth century by the British philosopher Edmund Burke, who describes the sublime as an emotional response when safety or a loss of reason is threatened by a dark, overwhelming, or pain-inducing object. With Kant, the sublime is repositioned from being a response to something outside of the human to being an experience of the supremacy of the powers of reason over nature as it occurs within us and in the external world. This experience takes the form of the mind setting itself in motion in a cycle of repulsion and attraction as it comes to terms with the awe-inspiring object before it. Our having sublime experience, Kant claims, is one of the ways we are able to have moral ideas which exceed the brute, causal order of the empirical world. Kant's theory of the sublime is appropriated by Lyotard as part of his argument to show that avant-garde art 'presents the unpresentable'. However, in 'The Sublime and the Avant-Garde', the essay from Lyotard in this volume, Burke's theory is more to the fore. Sublime experience involves the contradictory feelings of terror and delight and Burke identifies these with a sense of loss which is then withdrawn, allowing a normal sequence of experiences to return. Burke's removal of what is familiar, Lyotard argues, prepares the ground for the avant-garde's stripping away of established, conventional forms of representation.

symbolic In general terms, a symbol is an object, image, mark, word, or sound which signifies something else on the basis of association, resemblance, or convention. However, the 'symbolic' has special meaning within Lacanian and post-Lacanian psychoanalysis. Lacan theorizes the psyche as a three-part structure of 'real', 'imaginary', and 'symbolic'. The symbolic order is the order of language for Lacan, based on the three-way relationship between father, mother, and child in the Oedipus complex. In the Oedipus complex, the original, intimate relationship between boy-child and mother is broken when the child realizes that it has to compete with the father for his mother's affections. As a result, the subject (the child) now has to negotiate with and through a third term (the father and, by analogy, the word) to achieve contact with what was once directly and reciprocally in front of him (the mother and, by analogy, external

reality). In her structuralist interpretation of Lacan, Julia Kristeva draws on Lacan's distinction between the pre-Oedipal 'imaginary' and the post-Oedipal 'symbolic' stages in the development of a child's awareness. The imaginary is the period of transition from the child's not being able to distinguish where he ends and his mother begins to the realization that he is an object in the world among others. Because it is prior to the symbolic, the imaginary represents a domain of potential meaning, and it is the manner in which the imaginary breaks through and disrupts the symbolic which interests Kristeva. She adopts the term 'semiotic' to refer to the prelinguistic, generative aspect of the imaginary.

transcendental 'Transcendental' has two meanings in philosophy. First, it refers to what is beyond experience or beyond the everyday, empirical world, e.g. a higher or ultimate reality such as Plato's Forms or Kant's noumena (things in themselves). Second, it is given a very specific meaning in Kant's philosophy, denoting the conditions of the possibility of knowledge and experience, where the conditions are integral to knowledge and experience. When he refers to 'transcendental arguments' and 'transcendental knowledge', the term signifies *what must be presupposed, what can be shown to apply necessarily*, for experience and knowledge to be possible, where this demonstration of presupposition appeals only to experience itself, and not what might lie beyond it. Aware of the confusion that these two meanings might cause, Kant distinguishes 'transcendental' from 'transcendent', assigning the latter term the 'beyond experience' meaning (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A296, B352).

transcendental empiricism The term used by Gilles Deleuze to describe his philosophy in works from the early *Difference and Repetition* (1968) right up until *What is Philosophy?* (1991). For some, it might sound like an oxymoron since it throws together the empiricism of Hume with the transcendental philosophy of Kant, where the latter is meant to address problems created by alleged gaps in the former. But it is precisely this sense of philosophical impropriety which is fruitful for Deleuze. In the case of Kant's transcendental idealism, 'transcendental' refers not to a transcendent subject which sits above or beyond experience, but rather to the conditions which have to apply for continuous subjective experience *to be possible*, something Hume could only establish (weakly, in Kant's view) as a matter of custom. However, Deleuze does not even want to endorse the notion of continuous subjectivity, for this would simply reinstitute the binary opposition of a subject and its other. Rather, transcendental empiricism is a philosophy of immanence. It is not about the experiences of a pre-constituted subject (myself or an other), but about those events that disrupt experience in a way that my subjectivity *becomes possible*. The principal forms of experiential disruption for Deleuze are percepts, affects, and concepts.

transgression Transgression in art and aesthetics involves the creation of works or actions which cross boundaries, flout conventions, defy moral authorities, challenge social norms, or break taboos. Limits are tested in the interests of making us reconsider the conventions or pieties which discriminate between the representable and the unrepresentable, and of generating other, alternative, divergent possibilities.

zoē A category of life identified by Aristotle in the *Politics*, *zoē* is natural, simple life, associated with privacy and the home, in contrast to *bios*, understood as life that takes place within the public, political sphere of speech and action. See 'bare life' and '*bios*'. Giorgio Agamben refers to the distinction in his account of bare life (*homo sacer*), but does not equate bare life with *zoē*.

Index

a posteriori 10, 28, 152, 163, 394, 719
a priori: Adorno 238, 254; Bachelard 177; Deleuze and Guattari 627, 638; Derrida 543–5, 559; Dufrenne 152, 163; Foucault 529; Freud 318; glossary 719; Guattari 648, 650; Heidegger 82–3; Kant 6, 9, 10–15, 25–8, 30–1, 34; de Man 573, 577; Marcuse 260–1, 265; Sartre 132; Žižek 413
abjection 388–408, 493, 497–8, 500–1
absence: Blanchot 328, 331, 333, 335–6; Butler 499, 501; Derrida 557, 561–2, 565; Dufrenne 161–2; Foucault 521, 528–9; Irigaray 380–1, 384–5; Kristeva 392; Levinas, 143–4; Merleau-Ponty 469–70; Nancy 661–3, 665, 669; Rancière 706
abstraction: Adorno 237, 239, 242, 246–8, 251–2, 254; Badiou 697; Bakhtin 279, 282, 290; Deleuze and Guattari 629–30, 632, 634–6, 639; Guattari 649, 654; Habermas 298, 302; Hegel 42, 47–8, 50–1, 54–8; Lyotard 591, 593; Marcuse 265, 268; Marx 226–8, 230–2; Merleau-Ponty 454, 466, 470; Nancy 668–70; Nietzsche 68, 71–2; Rancière 704, 707, 710, 712, 714
Adorno, T. 234–57; glossary 719, 728; Habermas 295, 302, 305; introductions xiv–xv, 222, 515, 541, 618–19; Lyotard 593; Marcuse 258, 263; Rancière 713–14; Vattimo 212–13, 216, 218
aesthetic judgment: Bakhtin 281, 283, 285; Blanchot 329; Derrida 545–51, 554, 557–65; Gadamer 188; glossary 729; Habermas 302–3; Kant 4–34; Kristeva 393–4, 397; Nancy 664
aesthetics: Adorno 235, 238–40, 245–6, 249–51; Agamben 676–7, 680–2, Badiou 688–9, 692, 694, 696; Baudrillard 482–5; Benjamin 436, 443–5; Deleuze and Guattari 619, 627, 634–6, 639; Derrida 541–2, 544–9, 551, 557–60, 562–3; Dufrenne 152–4, 156–70; Foucault 529; Gadamer 186–92; Guattari 645–52, 654; Habermas 295–6, 298–9, 301–5; Hegel 40, 44; Heidegger 88, 91–2, 96–7, 111, 116; introductions xiii–xviii, 1–2, 78, 222, 307, 516, 616; Kristeva 388, 393, 398, 405; Levinas 140–3, 148; Lyotard 587, 590–4; Kant 4–8, 10–16, 19–31, 34; de Man 572, 574–9, 582; Marcuse 258–60, 262–3, 266–7; Nancy 659, 661, 663–4, 669; Nietzsche 64, 69; Rancière 701–15; Sartre 131–2; Vattimo 213–19; Virilio 509
affect: Badiou 690, 692, 695; Deleuze and Guattari 616, 618, 620–40; Derrida 542, 546–9, 561, 565; Freud 309–11, 318–19, 322; glossary 718; Guattari 647–9; Irigaray 384; Kristeva 389, 392–395, 405; Lyotard 590; Nancy 662, 664, 668
Agamben, G. 615–16, 672–85, 720, 732
aisthesis xiv–xv, 546, 661–2, 665, 668, 718
aletheia 81–2, 96, 103, 107, 173, 219, 718–19
alienation: Adorno 239–40; Agamben 674–7, 680–1, 683; Bachelard 174; Badiou 693–4; Benjamin 430, 444; glossary 719; Habermas 296, 302; Marcuse 260, 265, 267; Marx 223–4, 228; Rancière 713–14; Sartre 135
allegory: Adorno 252; Badiou 694; Barthes 520; Butler 499; Deleuze and Guattari 636; Dufrenne 163; Heidegger 88; Kant 19; Levinas 143–5; Rancière 707; Virilio 511
Althusser, L. 490–2, 503, 574, 701
analogy: Agamben 673, 676, 680; Badiou 690; Bakhtin 278, 284; Baudrillard 478, 481; Benjamin 430, 433, 439, 446, 448; Deleuze and Guattari 634; Derrida 541–2, 544, 550–1, 553, 556–7, 562–3; Dufrenne 167; Foucault 526, 534; Freud 312–13, 315; glossary 731; Hegel 54; Kant 6–7, 9, 20, 31–3, 36; Lacan 349, 360; Lyotard 589; de Man 572, 576–7; Marcuse 263; Merleau-Ponty 457, 460, 472; Nietzsche 69; Ricoeur 202–4, 208; Sartre 127; Vattimo 216, 218
anatomy: Bachelard 181; Benjamin 448; Deleuze and Guattari 633; Freud 317; Irigaray 376–7; Kant 26; Irigaray 384; Lacan 352; de Man 578; Marx 232
animals: Adorno 250, 253; Bataille 342–3, 345; Baudrillard 479; Cixous 605, 610; Deleuze and Guattari 623–5, 627, 629–30; Dufrenne 162; Guattari 644, 647; Freud 309–10, 315; glossary 730; Hegel 44–5, 52, 55; Heidegger 99, 100, 104, 113; Kant 8, 29, 30, 36; Kristeva 394–5; Lacan 355, 365, 367; Levinas 143; Marcuse 263; Marx 223–4, 230; Merleau-Ponty 454, 456, 462; Nietzsche 68; Rancière 706

anthropology: Adorno 253–4; Bachelard 176; Baudrillard 483; Dufrenne 168; Kristeva 400; Marx 231; Rancière 709; Ricoeur 203; Vattimo 217
anthropomorphism 32, 51, 64, 67–8, 70, 225, 263, 268
antithesis: Adorno 238, 242–3, 245, 250; Freud 318; glossary 722; Hegel 41–2, 57; Heidegger 117; Kant 24–5, 35; Marx 221, 224, 225, 230; Ricoeur 206
Apollinaire, G. 466, 594
Apollo 63, 404, 581
appearance: Adorno 241, 244, 247, 249–52; Agamben 675, 681; Badiou 691; Bakhtin 290; Baudrillard 478–9; Blanchot 330–1, 335–6; Butler 496; Deleuze and Guattari 629–31, 635; Derrida 556, 566; Dufrenne 152, 155, 158–9; glossary 727, 729–30; Habermas 302; Hegel 40–1, 50–1, 53, 55, 56; Heidegger 91, 101, 106–7, 113, 117, 119; Kant 4–5, 8–9, 24–8, 31; Kristeva 397; Levinas 144; Marcuse 265, Nietzsche 62, 64, 69; Rancière 707–13; Sartre 123, 133–4; Vattimo 218
archetypes 133, 239, 241, 251, 448, 703, 708
architecture: Agamben 682; Baudrillard 484; Benjamin 440–1, 443; Deleuze and Guattari 619, 628, 631, 634–5, 637; Derrida 544, 550, 554; Dufrenne 156–7, 159–61; Habermas 297; Hegel 42–3, 54–8; Heidegger 87–8, 113–14; Sartre 133
Aristotle: Agamben 672–3; Badiou 691–2, 697; Derrida 559; Foucault 529, 533; Heidegger 96; glossary 719–20, 732; Kant 4–5; Kristeva 404–5; Lacan 365; de Man 588, 591; Marx 231; Merleau-Ponty 463; Nancy 662, 668; Rancière 706; Ricoeur 207–8
Armitage, J. 506
Artaud, A. 403, 548, 637
Assemblage 643–50, 652–4
atheism 227, 232, 400, 403, 634, 668
atmosphere 146, 153–4, 159, 161–5, 168, 170, 274, 278, 346
aura: Agamben 674, 676; Benjamin 429–30, 433–5, 437–8, 441, 444; Dufrenne 165; glossary 719; Guattari 646, 649; Habermas 304; Nancy 660; Ricoeur 199; Vattimo 215, 218; Žižek 418, 423
autarky 302, 649
authenticity: Agamben 675–6; Badiou 694; Bakhtin 279, 289–91; Benjamin 432–4, 444–5; Blanchot 331–2, 336–7; Foucault 527, 530, 532, 537; Gadamer 190; Habermas 298–9, 301–2; Kristeva 396; Vattimo 215–17
authorship: Badiou 696–7; Bakhtin 271–88, 290–1; Barthes 519–23; Benjamin 438–9; Butler 492; Cixous 604; Deleuze and Guattari 623, 636; Dufrenne 169; Foucault 525–37; Gadamer 190; Kant 11, 17; de Man 581; Rancière 711; Ricoeur 196, 198–202, 207; Sartre 130, 133–5
autobiography 492, 623
autonomy: Adorno 234, 249, 251, 254; Benjamin 436; Deleuze and Guattari 622, 628, 634; Dufrenne 156; glossary 719, 726, 731; Guattari 646, 648, 650, 652; Habermas 301–5; Kant 10–11, 30; Kristeva 390, 396; Lacan 366; de Man 574–6; Merleau-Ponty 454, 463, 465; Nancy 660, 663, 669; Rancière 707–8, 710–14; Ricoeur 201; Sartre 127
autopoiesis 644–5, 649–54, 719
avant-garde: Badiou 694; glossary 731; Habermas 297–9; Lyotard 585, 588, 592–5; Rancière 712, 714–15; Vattimo 214–16

Bachelard, G. 170, 172–85, 511–12
Bacon, F., painter 627–9
Bacon, F., philosopher 510, 530
Badiou, A. 686–700, 725, 728
Bakhtin, M. 270–94, 624, 632, 724
Balzac, H.: Adorno 251; Bachelard 183–4; Barthes 520, 522; Deleuze and Guattari 624; Dufrenne 153, 155–6, 165; Foucault 530
bare life 672–4, 720
Barthes, R. 204, 517, 519–525, 574–6, 730–1
Bataille, G. 304, 336, 339–48, 660
Baudelaire, C. 298, 302, 429, 520, 522, 594, 662, 676
Baudrillard, J. 477–87, 730
Baumgarten, A. xv, 1, 3, 34, 590, 718
Bazin, A. 415
Bazin, P. 704
beauty: Adorno 238, 250; Agamben 676, 680; Badiou 695; Benjamin 430, 434–5, 438, 443, 445; Cixous 601, 604–6, 610; Derrida 541, 543–9, 551–2, 554, 557, 559–63, 565–6; Gadamer 187–9; glossary 718, 729, 731; Guattari 646, 648; Habermas 301; Hegel 42, 44–50, 53–4, 58; Heidegger 96, 105, 117; introduction xiv–xv; Kant 4–8, 10–12, 14–19, 21, 24, 27–34, 36; Kristeva 396, 404; Levinas 144–5, 147–8; Lyotard 589–93; Marcuse 258–63, 266–8; Marx 229–30; Merleau-Ponty 469; Nancy 659–60, 663; Rancière 708, 714; Sartre 131–4; Vattimo 215–17
Beckett, S. 216, 527, 625
becoming: Adorno 252; Bachelard 178; Bakhtin 289, 291–2; Deleuze and Guattari 622–32; Guattari 647, 654; Heidegger 107, 112, 115; Levinas 144, 147; Marx 227, 231; Rancière 715
Beethoven, L. van 88, 242, 433, 697
being: Bachelard 172–80, 182–4; Badiou 686–7, 693, 697–8; Bataille 341, 344; Blanchot 331, 333–4, 336; Butler 502; Deleuze and Guattari 620–3, 626–7, 629–30, 632–3, 638; Dufrenne 154, 159, 162, 164, 167–9, 171; Gadamer 188, 190–1; glossary 724–6, 728; Guattari 647–52; Heidegger 79–85, 88–90, 92–120; Irigaray 378–82; Kristeva 391, 393–6; Levinas 139–49; Lyotard 587; Marcuse 262–4; Merleau-Ponty 454–8, 460–7, 469–71; Nancy 657–8, 660–8; Rancière 708, 711; Vattimo 212–13, 216–17, 219; Virilio 509
Benjamin, W. 429–50; Adorno 243, 249; Agamben 674–7, 680–3; Baudrillard 478; glossary 719;

Habermas 299, 304; Rancière 706; Vattimo 215, 218
Bergson, H. 128, 147, 298, 467, 617, 625, 633–4, 638, 725
Beuys, J. 704, 712
Bible 92–3, 207, 274, 278, 356–7, 398, 400, 589
biography 128, 239, 286, 520, 532, 536, 606, 632
biology: Adorno 253–4; Butler 489, 491; Dufrenne 166; Foucault 531, 534; glossary 722–3, 728; Guattari 644, 649, 654; Irigaray 375–6; Kristeva 388, 406; Lacan 364; Marcuse 266–7; Merleau-Ponty 454
bios 673, 720
birth: Bataille 343; Heidegger 98, 100; Kristeva 390, 399, 406; Lacan 352; Marx 232; Nancy 661, 663–4; Vattimo 219
Blanchot, M. 182–3, 327–38, 619, 661, 728
blindness 65, 81, 365, 455, 460, 464, 483, 600, 635
body: Benjamin 439, 441, 443, 448; Butler 488–90, 496, 498–502; Cixous 600, 606, 609; Deleuze and Guattari 627–30, 638; Derrida 554, 556, 564; Freud 317; Hegel 42, 47, 51–2, 56; glossary 723; Guattari 654; Heidegger 102; Irigaray 374–6, 378–84; Kristeva 390–2, 394–6, 400–4; Levinas 142; Lyotard 591, 593; Marcuse 267; Merleau-Ponty 451–73; Nancy 662, 669; Nietzsche 62–3, 66; Sartre 127–8, 130, 132; Virilio 506, 508, 510; Žižek 412, 417, 423
Bonitzer, P. 423, 639
borders: Bachelard 175, 177; Badiou 696; Bakhtin 288; Derrida 552, 559, 561–2, 564–6; Kristeva 391, 393–4, 405; de Man 577, 580; Merleau-Ponty 467, 472; Nancy 660, 665
Borges, J.L. 401–2, 525
Bosch, H. 169
boundaries: Bakhtin 272, 276, 278–9, 281, 286, 289–90; Butler 490, 494; glossary 718, 726, 728, 732; Guattari 644, 649, 654; Heidegger 85, 109, 112, 118; introductions 339, 541–2; Kant 6, 18; Kristeva 398; Lacan 369; Nietzsche 68, 71; Rancière 714
bourgeois: Adorno 236–7, 240, 242–3, 248, 254; Benjamin 447–8; Foucault 536; Habermas 303; Lacan 358; Marcuse 259, 267; Sartre 132, 136; Virilio 508
Bourriaud, N. 615, 645
Braque, G. 506, 592
Brecht, B. 254, 304, 413, 446, 521, 693
Brentano, F. 77–8, 312, 728
Breton, A. 129, 339, 448, 594, 694
Brontë, E. 625
Broodthaers, M. 704
Burckhardt, J. 242
Bürger, P. 299
Burke, E. 585, 587–8, 591–2, 664, 731
Butler, J. 308, 488–505, 723, 728

Caillois, R. 248, 343
capital 225–6, 229, 253, 438, 445, 594–5, 644, 648, 650
capitalism: Adorno 234, 239, 254; Barthes 520; Benjamin 431, 439; glossary 719, 721–2, 730; Guattari 644, 647–9, 654; Habermas 300, 304; Lyotard 585, 594; Marcuse 258–63, 266–7; Marx 223–4, 226, 233; Rancière 713–4
carnival 271–2
Cartesianism: glossary 718, 721, 723–4, 727; introductions xv, xviii, 43, 80, 123, 427, 429, 617, 657–8; Levinas 147; de Man 579; Merleau-Ponty 460–1, 463–4, 469; Žižek 409–10, 416
castration 320, 392, 405, 502, 566
categories: Benjamin 434; Butler 488–9, 496; Derrida 559, 562–3; Dufrenne 167; Freud 314; Foucault 525, 527, 535; glossary 723, 726, 728–9, 731; Habermas 295–6, 302; Kant 3, 5, 8, 13, 34; Lacan 357, 360, 366, 369; Levinas 139, 141, 143; Lyotard 590; de Man 577; Marcuse 261, 265–6; Merleau-Ponty 459; Nietzsche 68, 70; Rancière 703, 709
catharsis 310, 398, 401, 403–6, 433, 692
Cather, W. 493, 501–2
cathexis 260, 311–12, 319–22, 720–1
cave paintings (Lascaux) 343, 346, 456–7, 660, 666, 668–9
Cervantes, M. de 145, 279–80, 288, 697
Cézanne, P.: Blanchot 328–9; Cixous 603; Deleuze and Guattari 621–3, 627–8, 637; Dufrenne 165; Lyotard 592–3; Merleau-Ponty 452, 455–6, 459, 465–6, 472
chaos 63, 249, 516, 574, 603, 628, 631, 636–8, 645, 651–4, 696
chaosmosis 645, 652–4
chiasm 452, 493
childhood 128, 134, 183, 264, 310, 355, 357, 366, 391, 622, 664
childlike 136, 144, 670
children: Adorno 239, 243–4, 252–3; Bachelard 183; Butler 488, 497–501; Deleuze and Guattari 621–3; Derrida 552, 556, 564; Freud 310; glossary 725, 727–8, 731–2; Irigaray 374–5, 377, 381, 384; Kristeva 388, 391–2, 396, 399, 404; Lacan 351, 355, 364–5; Marcuse 267; Sartre 131–2, 135; Žižek 414, 416, 420
chora 396–7
Christianity: Adorno 242; Agamben 683; Bataille 339–40, 344–5; Derrida 558; Dufrenne 153; Foucault 532; Gadamer 189; Habermas 297; Hegel 47–8, 50, 52, 58; Kristeva 398; Lyotard 585, 589; Nancy 669; Rancière 704, 710
cinema: Adorno 239–40; Badiou 698; Baudrillard 477–85; Benjamin 439, 446–7; Butler 498–500; Deleuze and Guattari 631, 639; Dufrenne 157, 165; Guattari 646; Levinas 146; Merleau-Ponty 468; Rancière 705; Virilio 507–10; Žižek 413–4, 417; *see also* film
cities 148, 156–8, 162, 242, 274, 330, 624
Cixous, H. 374, 388, 598–614, 723, 728
classical: Adorno 249; Badiou 691–4, 696–7; Benjamin 433; Derrida 561; Dufrenne 155, 159;

Guattari 649; Habermas 298; Hegel 41–2, 51–3, 55–6, 58; Kant 10, 15, 18; Levinas 141, 143, 145, 147; Lyotard 587, 589, 591–2, 594; de Man 570, 578; Merleau-Ponty 452, 454, 462, 465, 468, 471; Nancy 659, 664
clearing 82, 104–5, 107–9, 111, 113–14, 118, 693
cogito xv, 166, 350, 363, 409, 726
collectivity 136, 442, 708
collectivization 236, 240
colour: Adorno 252; Bachelard 182; Butler 497; Cixous 599–600, 603, 606, 611; Deleuze and Guattari 620–3, 626, 628–30, 632–5, 638–9; Derrida 551, 557–8, 562–3, 566; Dufrenne 156, 159–61, 165; Gadamer 188; Habermas 302; Hegel 44, 48, 55–7, 59; Heidegger 81, 88–9, 91, 100–1, 109; Kant 29–30, 33; Kristeva 395, 404; Lacan 361; Levinas 143–4; Lyotard 587, 592–3; Merleau-Ponty 452–3, 456–8, 461, 466–7, 470; Nancy 662, 665–6; Nietzsche 67–8, 70; Sartre 125, 127–8
communication: Adorno 238, 244, 247, 249; Bataille 340; Blanchot 334; Deleuze and Guattari 623, 628; Dufrenne 153, 159, 162, 164; Freud 318, 320; Gadamer 187; glossary 726, 730; Guattari 648; Habermas 295–6, 300–2; Heidegger 113; Kant 16–20, 22, 34; Kristeva 401, 405; Lacan 353, 370; Levinas 141; de Man 580; Nietzsche 65; Ricoeur 198, 202, 204; Sartre 130, 136–7; Vattimo 213, 216
communism 135, 224–7, 232–3, 300, 409, 412, 422, 444, 694
community: Adorno 240, 242; Agamben 681; Butler 498–501, 503; glossary 719, 726; Hegel 54–5, 59; Lacan 353, 355; Lyotard 592–4; Marcuse 267; Marx 226, 228; Nancy 657; Rancière 702–7, 709–13; Ricoeur 208
competition 226, 236, 260, 262, 299–300, 344, 496, 574
composition: Adorno 234–5, 247; Bakhtin 274, 276, 281, 290, 292; Deleuze and Guattari 621, 631–7; Derrida 551–2, 562; Dufrenne 157, 159–60, 165; Foucault 533, 536; Guattari 646, 648, 653–4; Heidegger 88, 113; Kant 8, 16; Lacan 364; Lyotard 588; Sartre 128, 133
Comte, A. 155, 310
concealment: Bakhtin 276–7, 283; Blanchot 331, 333, 336, Gadamer 190–1; Heidegger 81–82, 98, 102–5, 107–8, 113, 117–19; Žižek 413–14, 416–17, 422
concept: Adorno 234–5, 237–8, 243–4, 249; Badiou 687–91, 695–8; Bakhtin 274, 278–9, 289–91; Deleuze and Guattari 617–19, 626–8, 630, 635–7; Derrida 541–2, 545–6, 548, 551–3, 558–65; Dufrenne 167; Gadamer 186–7, 191; Guattari 644, 652, 654; Hegel 40–3, 45–6, 48–51, 53, 58; Heidegger 87–8, 90–3, 97, 103, 111, 113–14; introductions xvi–xvii, 1, 78, 517, 615–16; Kant 3–28, 31–6; Lacan 354; Levinas 139–43, 146–7, 149; Lyotard 590; de Man 570–1, 573; Marcuse 258–60, 263–6; Merleau-Ponty 461, 463, 467; Nancy 662–3, 668–9; Nietzsche 63–4, 67–8, 70–3; Vattimo 212–13, 215, 217–8
conceptual art 630, 636
concrete: Adorno 238, 248, 254; Agamben 677, 682–3; Bachelard 176, 180, 183; Bakhtin 274, 277, 279–81, 290, 292; Freud 322, 324; Hegel 42, 47–58; Lacan 352–3; Levinas 142, 144; Marcuse 260–1, 265, 267; Rancière 710, 713; Ricoeur 203, 205–6, 209; Vattimo 214, 217–18
conformity (to law or a metaphysics): Adorno 253; Baudrillard 478–9; Butler 492, 496; Derrida 563; Hegel 47–49, 51, 53, 56–7; Heidegger 103; Kant 19, 27–8; Lacan 356; Nietzsche 70; Rancière 708
consensus 215–6, 218, 654
constellation 214, 235, 458, 481, 624, 627, 636, 646–7, 650, 654
consumers 246, 265, 303, 438, 498, 595
consumption 227–9, 238, 300, 364, 714
contemplation: Adorno 239, 250–3; Benjamin 430, 435, 440–4, 448; Cixous 606; Deleuze and Guattari 623; Dufrenne 166; Hegel 54; Heidegger 104; Irigaray 382; Kristeva 394, 396; Levinas 140, 143–4, 148; Lyotard 591; Marx 228–9; Rancière 711; Sartre 130, 134; Žižek 412, 421
content: Adorno 245, 248; Agamben 675, 677, 680, 682; Bakhtin 270, 272; Barthes 519, 521; Bataille 344; Deleuze and Guattari 631; Derrida 557, 559–61, 563, 566; Foucault 527, 529; Freud 311–12, 314, 318–22; Gadamer 186, 191; Hegel 42, 44, 46–58; Heidegger 84; Kant 3, 13, 21, 31; Kristeva 392–3; de Man 575; Marcuse 265; Marx 228, 230; Merleau-Ponty 465–6; Nietzsche 66; Žižek 409, 411–13, 415, 418
contradiction: Adorno 234–5, 238, 242, 244–5, 248, 251–2; Bakhtin 277, 283, 289, 291, 293; Baudrillard 485; Blanchot 334; Derrida 543, 561, 563; Foucault 532; glossary 719, 722, 731; Guattari 651, 654; Kant 4, 6–7, 24–25, 32; Kristeva 397; Lacan 357; Lyotard 585, 587–8, 591–2; Marx 225, 227–8, 231; Merleau-Ponty 467, 470; Nancy 661, 669; Nietzsche 69; Rancière 703, 711–14; Ricoeur 197, 200–1, 203, 206–7; Sartre 126, 135; Vattimo 214; Žižek 419–20
corporeality 55, 263, 379, 395, 404, 437, 463, 468, 653–4
correctness: Freud 316; Gadamer 188; Hegel 49; Heidegger 81, 103, 105, 108; Kant 15, 18–19, 28; Levinas 145; de Man 579, 581, 583; Nietzsche 64, 67, 69; Sartre 129
craft 88, 93, 106–7, 109, 141, 189, 241, 245, 248, 415, 430–1, 712; *see also* skill
Cratylism 576
creativity: Agamben 680; Badiou 693–4; Bakhtin 292; Benjamin 431, 445; Deleuze and Guattari 624, 626, 633; Dufrenne 154, 158, 167; Foucault 529, 532; Gadamer 188; Guattari 646, 649–52, 654; Heidegger 98, 106–7, 112, 115, 118; Kant

21, 34; Lacan 358, 363–4; Levinas 148; de Man 583; Marcuse 262; Merleau-Ponty 467; Nietzsche 64, 71; Ricoeur 201; Sartre 128
Critchley, S. xvi–xviii
critical theory 222, 243, 295, 721
criticism: Adorno 241–3, 253; Agamben 683; Bachelard 178, 181; Barthes 520, 522–3; Benjamin 438, 440; Foucault 527–8, 531–2; Habermas 296, 300–2; Levinas 139–42, 146–9; Lyotard 587, 593; de Man 573–5, 580
cubism 8, 247, 449, 466, 468, 624, 646

Dadaism 296, 298, 441–2, 448–9, 694
Dasein: Dufrenne 164, 168, 171; Gadamer 187; glossary 719, 721, 726; Heidegger 79–85, 114, 120; Nancy 657
death: Adorno 238, 242, 254; Agamben 680; Barthes 520, 523; Bataille 343–6; Baudrillard 482; Blanchot 327–8, 331–5; Butler 493, 497–8; Cixous 608–9; Deleuze and Guattari 624, 630, 632; Derrida 548, 565; Dufrenne 162; Foucault 525, 527–9, 532; Guattari 649; Heidegger 82, 88, 95, 98, 100; Kant 19–20; Kristeva 390–1, 396–8, 401–4; Levinas 145, 147, 149; Lyotard 591–2; Marx 228; Nancy 660, 663; Rancière 704, 712; Ricoeur 206–7; Vattimo 219; Virilio 509–10; Žižek 416–17, 419–23
death of art 43, 212–19
deconstruction 375–6, 540–1, 561, 570–1, 598, 657, 663, 669, 722, 726
decoration 160, 369, 551, 554, 566, 605, 713
defamiliarization 85
Deleuze, G. 617–42; Badiou 686, 695–6; glossary 718, 720, 725, 728, 730, 732; introductions 643, 645, 701
democracy 227, 447, 654, 698, 707, 710, 713–14
Derrida, J. 540–69; glossary 722, 728; Habermas 304; introductions 84, 489, 571, 615, 618–19, 672; Nancy 670
Descartes, R. xv, 1, 3, 4, 103, 350, 459–65, 477, 516, 691, 720, 726
desire: Bachelard 179–80; Badiou 692–4; Bataille 342; Butler 495, 497–500, 502; Cixous 599–602, 605–6, 610; Derrida 542–5; glossary 723, 727; Guattari 648; Irigaray 377–82, 384; Kant 27, 32; Kristeva 389–92, 394–7, 400–1, 405; Lacan 349–51, 359, 362–4, 367, 369; Nancy 659–61, 668; Rancière 709, 711, 713; Virilio 506, 508; Žižek 409–10, 413, 416, 419–22
dialectic: Adorno 239, 243–4, 252–3; Bachelard 174, 176, 178–9, 183; Badiou 691, 693; Bataille 341; Baudrillard 481, 483–5; Benjamin 431, 444, 448; Derrida 559; Dufrenne 164–5; glossary 721–2; Hegel 41–2; Heidegger 105, 117; Kant 6–7; Kristeva 392, 398, 405; Lacan 349–50, 355, 359, 361, 364; Levinas 141, 144, 146; Lyotard 594; de Man 578, 581, 583; Marcuse 258, 264–5, 267–8; Marx 223–4; Nancy 663, 665, 669; Rancière 714; Sartre 136; Žižek 409–10, 415
dialectical materialism 264, 308, 409, 693, 722
dialogical 201, 271–4, 279, 282, 288–90, 724
Dickens, C. 146, 251, 272, 274–5, 278–9
Diderot, D. 590
différance 565–6, 662
dilettantism 238
Dilthey, W. 77, 196–7, 200–2, 205, 207, 218
Dionysus 63, 156, 304, 331, 404
disclosure: Dufrenne 161–2, 168–70; Gadamer 190, 192; glossary 718–19; Heidegger 80–4, 96–7, 101, 108, 114–15; Levinas 143–4; Sartre 130
discourse: Badiou 699; Bakhtin 271–7, 279–82, 285–93; Butler 489–90, 492, 501; Derrida 543, 545, 547–52, 560–3; Foucault 526, 530–7; glossary 722–4, 728; Habermas 301; Irigaray 377–9, 381–6; Kristeva 390, 392–3; 404–5; Lacan 351–3, 356, 359–60, 365–7; Lyotard 588–9; de Man 572, 577–80, 583; Nancy 663–5, 670; Rancière 706; Ricoeur 195–200, 202, 204–8; Sartre 129, 134; Vattimo 217; Virilio 511; Žižek 422
disinterest: Adorno 238, 246, 250; Derrida 544, 546–8, 559, 562–3; Gadamer 188; Levinas 141–2, 148; Sartre 130, 136
dissimulation 65–6, 71, 145, 331, 334
distance: Badiou 693; Bakhtin 275, 279, 282–3, 288; Baudrillard 480; Benjamin 429–30, 433, 439, 444–5; Butler 501; Deleuze and Guattari 622, 625, 627, 629, 633, 636; Dufrenne 153, 155, 158; Foucault 533; Freud 322; Gadamer 187, 190–1; Heidegger 93; Levinas 144; Merleau-Ponty 457, 460, 462–4, 466; Nancy 659, 664; Rancière 704–8, 713; Ricoeur 205–6; Sartre 134; Virilio 508–9; Žižek 414–16
distribution (of the sensible) 701–3, 706–9, 711, 715
Don Quixote 281, 288
Dostoyevsky, F. 146, 149, 271, 398–400, 632
double conscience 316
drama: Adorno 238–40, 243, 249, 254; Bachelard 177–8; Bakhtin 286, 289–91, 293; Baudrillard 481, 485; Benjamin 437; Dufrenne 156–7, 160, 163; Ricoeur 204; Sartre 134; Žižek 413–14
drawing: Bachelard 174; Baudrillard 484; Benjamin 432; Cixous 602, 605, 608, 610–11; Deleuze and Guattari 621, 629, 634–5, 639; Derrida 551; Heidegger 112, 119; Merleau-Ponty 455, 457, 459, 461, 465, 467–8, 473; Sartre 125, 135; Virilio 510
dreams: Adorno 244, 249; Bachelard 179–80, 182; Baudrillard 483–4; Blanchot 333; Cixous 604, 609–10; Dufrenne 154, 162; Freud 309–10, 314–15, 318, 320; Guattari 653; Lacan 359–62, 364; Levinas 142, 146–7; Nietzsche 66, 69–71
dromology 506, 723
Duchamp, M. 468, 593, 647
Dufrenne, M. 152–71, 638
duration: Benjamin 433; Blanchot 329; Deleuze and Guattari 621–2, 634, 639; Dufrenne 156, 162–3; Guattari 647; Levinas 145, 147; Merleau-Ponty 468–9; Virilio 509–12; Žižek 420

Dürer, A. 112, 626, 679–80, 683
Duve, T. de 704

earth: Cixous 601, 603, 608, 610; Deleuze and Guattari 621, 624, 626, 630–3, 636; Dufrenne 166; Hegel 54; Heidegger 81–5, 89, 95, 99, 101–2, 105–6, 108–14, 119; Irigaray 385; Kant 30; Marx 231; Nancy 669; Sartre 126–8, 133; Vattimo 212–13, 218–19; Virilio 508, 510–11
ecology 260–1, 304, 643–4, 651, 658
economics: Adorno 243–4, 246; Agamben 683; Derrida 542, 547, 556; Guattari 645–6, 648; Habermas 299–300, 304; Lyotard 594; Marx 223–33
écriture feminine 374, 388, 598, 723
ego: Adorno 246, 254; Barthes 521; Butler 493, 501–2; Cixous 603; Freud 312, 315, 318–19, 322; Kristeva 390, 392, 394, 396–7, 399–400; Lacan 349, 365–6, 371; Marcuse 262, 265; Marx 229, 232
Eliot, T.S. 573
emancipation: Adorno, 234, 242, 249; Habermas 295, 302, 304; Marcuse 258–9, 262–3, 265–6; Marx 229, 231–2; Rancière 704, 710–11, 713
embodiment: Bakhtin 275, 292; Butler 496, 499–500; Deleuze and Guattari 627; glossary 723; Hegel 51, 57–8; Marcuse 267; Rancière 712
Emmanuel, P. 129
emotions: Adorno 238–9, 244–5, 254; Bakhtin 282, 284–5, 290; Bataille 340–1, 343; Baudrillard 482; Cixous 603; Deleuze and Guattari 639; Derrida 551, 562; Dufrenne 160, 164; Habermas 297, 302, 304; Lacan 366; Lyotard 592; Nancy 660, 664–5; Sartre 125–6, 129
empirical: Derrida 545, 548–9, 551, 558, 562, 566; Dufrenne 168; Foucault 528–9, 534; Kant 3–5, 11–14, 20, 26, 28, 30–33; Lacan 363; Lyotard 592; de Man 573; Marcuse 261, 264; Marx 227; Merleau-Ponty 452, 462, 466; Nancy 666; Nietzsche 69–70
empiricism: Barthes 520; Derrida 545, 547, 556, 559, 563; glossary 719, 721; Guattari 649; Kant 3, 28; Levinas 142; Lyotard 591; Merleau-Ponty 452
Engels, F. 221
Enlightenment 5, 222, 234, 237, 295, 297, 301–3, 721
equipment: Benjamin 437, 439–40, 446–7, 449; Heidegger 83–85, 92–97, 100–1, 104–7, 109–10, 112
eroticism: Adorno 239–40; Butler 498–503; Bataille 339–46; Kristeva 396, 400, 403; Marcuse 260, 266–7; Nancy 662, 665
essence: Adorno 239, 241, 250, 252; Badiou 691–2; Benjamin 433; Blanchot 328–35; Derrida 544, 548, 554, 561, 565; glossary 724, 726; Hegel 48–9, 53; Heidegger 87, 90, 92–7, 100–19; human (Marx) 225–33; Irigaray 379; Levinas 140, 143–5, 147; Merleau-Ponty 456, 459, 467; Nancy 659, 664–9; Nietzsche 67, 69–70
ethics: Agamben 675, 677; Badiou 692; Foucault 527; Guattari 649–50, 654; Habermas 299, 304; Irigaray 382; Kristeva 404–05; Levinas 145; de Man 572, 577; Marcuse 266–7; Rancière 704, 707–9, 715; *see also* morality
etymology 72, 142–3, 219, 541, 552
excess: Adorno 236, 239, 244, 246; Bakhtin 279; Baudrillard 479–80; Blanchot 331; Butler 492, 494, 498; Gadamer 191; Nancy 659; Virilio 509
exchange value 218, 252, 267, 648
exhibition: Badiou 693–5; Benjamin 435, 440, 445–7; concepts (Kant) 13, 19–23, 26–7, 31–2, 36; Heidegger 87, 94, 98–9, 102, 105; qualities (Dufrenne) 160, 162; Rancière 704, 706–7, 712, 714; Vattimo 218;
exhibition value 430, 435, 446, 719
exhibitionism 244–5
existentialism 123, 126, 250, 410, 415, 724
expressed world 158–65
expression: Adorno 238, 240, 242, 244–5, 247–9, 253–4; Bachelard 174–6, 179–80, 182, 184; Bakhtin 287–8, 291; Barthes 522; Blanchot 329–30; Baudrillard 484; Deleuze and Guattari 627; Dufrenne 152, 158–65, 167–8; Foucault 527, 532; Gadamer 187, 189, 191; Guattari 644, 648–9; Habermas 302; Hegel 49–55, 58; Heidegger 113, 118; Kant 20–3, 32; Levinas 140; Lyotard 590–1, 594; Marx 225–9, 231; Merleau-Ponty 461–2, 467, 470; Nietzsche 66–7, 69; Rancière 708, 711
expressionism 240, 254, 259, 598, 635

fantasy: Baudrillard 479, 485; Butler 497, 500; Irigaray 378, 380, 382–3; Kristeva 400, 402; Žižek 412, 414, 416, 420, 422
fascism 215, 238–9, 241–2, 247, 430–1, 443–5, 694, 721
feminine: Butler 488, 496, 498–500, 502; Irigaray 377, 379, 382; Kristeva 388, 400; Rancière 708; Žižek 412
feminism: Butler 488–9, 494–5; Cixous 598; glossary 720, 723; Irigaray 374–6, Kristeva 388–9; Marcuse 259
fidelity 238, 330, 336, 598, 606–7, 609, 687–8
Fielding, H. 274, 279
figurative: Adorno 237; Bachelard 177–8, 180; Badiou 698; Hegel 47; Lacan 360–1; Lyotard 591; Merleau-Ponty 457, 466–7, 470; Rancière 704, 710, 714
film: Adorno 238–9, 241, 245, 252; Baudrillard 477–85; Benjamin 430, 432–3, 435–49; Butler 490, 493–501; Dufrenne 157, 164–5; Vattimo 215; Virilio 507, 511; Žižek 409–23; *see also* cinema
fine art 8, 12, 15–20, 23, 27, 31, 44, 46, 54, 96; 544, 559
finitude 3, 6, 40, 52, 54, 167, 645–7, 649, 651–4, 660, 692–3, 696
Flaubert, G. 527, 713

flesh: Badiou 693; Deleuze and Guattari 619, 627–31, 638; Lacan 364; Merleau-Ponty 452–3, 456–7, 459–60, 465, 467, 469; Sartre 126–7, 133
forgetfulness: Baudrillard 482; Blanchot 327, 329, 331, 333, 335–6; Cixous 607, 610–11; Guattari 647; introduction xvi; Irigaray 380, 385; Kristeva 393–5, 404; Merleau-Ponty 458, 462, 471–2; Nietzsche 66–9
form: Adorno 238, 240, 242, 247, 249–50, 252; Bakhtin 270–1, 274, 276–7, 279, 281–6, 288–9, 292; Barthes 522; Baudrillard 482–3, 485; Blanchot 329–36; Deleuze and Guattari 627, 631; Derrida 551–2, 556–63; Dufrenne 162, 164–5, 169; Foucault 528, 531, 535–7; Gadamer 187–89; Hegel 41–3, 47–58; Heidegger 91–7, 101, 112, 116–7; Kant 4, 14–16, 18–21, 23, 29–31; Kristeva 398, 404–5; Lacan 361; Levinas 143–5; de Man 576; Marx 226–31; Marcuse 262–5, 267; Merleau-Ponty 462–3, 465–6; Nietzsche 63–4, 66–7, 70; Rancière 704–15; Ricoeur 197, 201, 203; Sartre 123–5, 132, 136–7; Vattimo 219; Virilio 509, 511
form–content 47–58, 91–2, 132, 165, 201, 203, 274, 423, 462–3, 485
formalism 341, 353, 556, 558–9, 577, 593, 646, 713; Russian 204, 270
formulae: Adorno 246; Bachelard 179; Benjamin 443; Deleuze and Guattari 633; Freud 320, 322; Kant 12, 18; Lacan 353–4, 358, 363, 366; Levinas 141; Lyotard 595; Merleau-Ponty 456, 470; Rancière 712; Sartre 128; Virilio 510; Žižek 412
Foucault, M. 271, 304, 489, 525–539, 638, 673, 720, 722
fractal 653, 659–68
fragment 101, 251, 415, 417, 550, 600, 650, 657–70, 694, 697
frame: Bakhtin 277–8, 286, 289; Benjamin 442; Butler 500; Deleuze and Guattari 619, 628, 631–3, 636; Derrida 541–2, 544–5, 547, 550–64, 566–7; Dufrenne 157
Frankfurt School 222, 295, 574, 721
freedom: Adorno 236–7, 239–42, 245, 251, 253; Bachelard 178, 180; Bakhtin 282; Cixous 609; glossary 729; Hegel 44, 51, 53; introductions xv; Kant 6, 7, 9, 13, 16, 19–20, 22–3, 26, 28, 30, 32–3; Levinas 141–2, 146; Marcuse 260–1, 263–6; Nietzsche 72; Rancière 709–11
Freud, S. Adorno 244–5; Badiou 693; Benjamin 440; Blanchot 334; Butler 501; Foucault 534–5; Freud 309–26; glossary 720–1, 727; Irigaray 374–7, 384, 386; Kristeva 392, 396, 404–5; Lacan 349–50, 352, 358–72; Lyotard 592; Nancy 664; Ricoeur 195; Žižek 418, 420
future: Adorno 232, 247; Agamben 674, 677, 680–2; Benjamin 448; Blanchot 329, 336–7; Cixous 601, 609; Deleuze and Guattari 626, 635; Gadamer 192; Habermas 298; Heidegger 115; Kristeva 396; Levinas 145–7; Lyotard 586–7; de Man 577, 579; Merleau-Ponty 456, 465, 470–1; Nancy 661, 664; Sartre 130; Virilio 509
futurism 240, 247, 443, 449, 694, 712

Gadamer, H.-G. 186–94, 212, 724
Galileo 200, 290, 534–5, 693
gardens 156, 188, 600–3, 628, 665
gaze: Butler 498–500; Cixous 604, 606–7, 611; Levinas 143–4; Merleau-Ponty 456–8; Sartre 124, 129, 131; Žižek 409–10, 412–22
gender 66, 72, 376, 388, 488–90, 493–503, 725, 728
Genet, J. 604, 607
genetic 365, 397, 483, 629–30, 648–9, 651
genius: Agamben 680, 682; Badiou 691; Barthes 520; Benjamin 431; Deleuze and Guattari 628; Derrida 544; Foucault 536; Gadamer 187; Heidegger 114; Kant 8, 16–23, 27, 31; Lyotard 589–90; Nancy 664; Nietzsche 68; Ricoeur 201; Sartre 133; Vattimo 215, 217–18
genre: Badiou 697; Bakhtin 272, 274–6, 279, 281, 286–92; Dufrenne 160; Foucault 527, 531; Lyotard 588, 591; Nancy 659; Ricoeur 201; Vattimo 214; Žižek 413–15
geography xvi, 155–7, 160, 379, 511, 531
geometry: Bachelard 172, 174–8, 180, 182–4; Baudrillard 485; Deleuze and Guattari 620, 629, 632; Kant 17; Kristeva 404; de Man 579; Merleau-Ponty 467–8; Rancière 710; Sartre 133; Virilio 509
Gide, A. 135, 368
Girandoux, J. 132, 145, 153, 163
Glendinning, S. xvii–xviii
God: Barthes 522; Bataille 345; Benjamin 448; Blanchot 335–6; Cixous 600–1, 605–7, 609–11; Derrida 554, 561; Foucault 529; glossary 721, 726; Guattari 648, 651; Hegel 46–50, 52, 54–56; Heidegger 88–9, 93, 115; Kant 7, 32, 36; Irigaray 378, 381–82; Kristeva 391, 398–9, 403; Levinas 149; Lyotard 589; Marx 232; Merleau-Ponty 461, 464, 469, 473; Nancy 669; Rancière 704, 715; Ricoeur 207; Sartre 129, 131–2; Žižek 412, 422
goddesses 73, 707–9, 713
gods: Adorno 242; Bachelard 179; Badiou 693–4; Bakhtin 292; Baudrillard 479; Benjamin 435, 444; Blanchot 335–6; Cixous 610; Deleuze and Guattari 638; Gadamer 189; Guattari 647–8, 650; Hegel 48, 52, 54–6; Heidegger 98–100, 104, 113; Lacan 355, 361; Levinas 146; Merleau-Ponty 469; Nancy 63, 68–9; Nietzsche 63, 68, 71
Goethe, J.W. von 59, 149, 191, 248, 287, 370–1, 444
grammar 156, 276, 296, 356–7, 532, 534–5, 559, 576, 578–83
Greek art: Agamben 681; Badiou 696; Barthes 522; Foucault 527; Hegel 58; Heidegger 96, 98, 106–7; Levinas 145; Vattimo 219; Rancière 707, 711
Greek gods 48, 52, 63
Greek language 88, 89–90, 96, 99, 103, 107–8, 117–18, 251, 552

Greek thought 103, 107, 116–18, 696, 718, 722
Greeks: Adorno 242; Bataille 343; Benjamin 431, 434, 442; Heidegger 89–90; Kristeva 396, 405; Nietzsche 71; Ricoeur 199
Greimas, A.J. 204, 574, 579, 582
Guattari, F. 617–56, 718–20, 725, 728, 730

Habermas, J. 295–306, 725–6
happiness 69, 71–2, 148, 246, 250, 301–2, 329, 336, 377, 413
harmony: Adorno 239, 247; Deleuze and Guattari 620, 626, 633; Derrida 560–1; Dufrenne 159–61, 165–6, 170; Gadamer 188; Hegel 47–8, 51; Kant 4, 7, 13–15, 19, 22, 25–9, 32; Kristeva 399, 404; Lacan 357, 367; Lyotard 589–90; Žižek 414, 416–17
Haydn, J. 252, 697
hedonism 63, 299–300,
Hegel, G.W.F. 40–61; Adorno 234–5, 242, 249; Badiou 695; Bataille 340–1; Benjamin 445; Blanchot 332; Derrida 543, 545, 547, 565–7; Gadamer 187–8; glossary 721–2, 727; Habermas 295, 302; Heidegger 85, 116–17; introductions xiv, xviii, 62, 139, 223–5, 349–50; Kristeva 405; de Man 575–6, 578; Marcuse 258–9, 265; Nancy 661–3, 666, 668–9; Rancière 712; Sartre 126; Vattimo 212–16; Žižek 409–10, 417
Heidegger, M. 79–122; Badiou 693–4, 699; Bataille 343; Derrida 541, 545, 547–8, 558; Dufrenne 152, 164, 167–8, 170–1; glossary 718–19, 721, 724, 726; introductions 123, 173, 186, 195, 328; Lacan 369; Levinas 141–2; Lyotard 586; de Man 570, 574–5; Nancy 657, 668–9; Vattimo 212–19
Heraclitus 99, 491
hermeneutics: Badiou 693–4; Gadamer 186–92; glossary 724; Habermas 295–7, 301; introductions 77–8, 79–81, 85, 212; de Man 574, 580, 582; Nancy 667; Ricoeur 195–6, 201, 205–7, 209
heteroglossia 272, 274–92, 724
historicism 297, 299, 574
historicity xvii, 187, 454, 471, 482, 492, 551, 681–2
history: Adorno 234–5, 237, 239, 243, 247–9; Agamben 674, 677, 680–3; Baudrillard 482, 484–5; Benjamin 431–4, 441–5; Blanchot 330, 332, 335–6; Foucault 527, 529, 535; Gadamer 187–8, 191; Habermas 297–9, 303; Hegel 58; Heidegger 111, 114–15; introductions xvii, 40; Irigaray 377, 385; Kant 15; Lacan 353, 364, 368, 372; Levinas 146, 148; de Man 572, 574; Marcuse 260–1, 265; Marx 227, 230–2; Merleau-Ponty 454–5, 465, 471; Nancy 663, 666; Nietzsche 65; Sartre 133–4, 136; Virilio 510, 512; Žižek 412
Hitchcock, A. 410, 417–23
Hölderlin, F.: Adorno 248; Agamben 676; Blanchot 329–31, 335–6; Heidegger 88, 96, 116; Lacan 364; Rancière 712; Vattimo 219
Hollywood 241, 419, 483
Homer 17, 160, 277, 444, 530, 533
hooks, b. 490, 494, 499–500
hope 250–1, 610
horizon: Bakhtin 281–2, 288, 292; Dufrenne 154–5, 157–9, 162, 170; Gadamer 187, 190; Guattari 647, 650, 654; Heidegger 80, 82; introduction xvii; Levinas 147; Marcuse 264
Hume, D. 3, 12, 309, 350, 617–18, 728, 732
Husserl, E. 77–8, 144, 166, 195, 201, 547, 574, 586, 725–6, 728
hybridity 189, 276–8, 283, 285–6, 292, 557
hyperrealism 428, 477, 484–5, 730
hypotyposis 31, 365, 485, 544
Hyppolite, J. 174

iconography 459
idea: Adorno 234–5, 237–8, 242, 249, 251; aesthetic (Kant) 7–8, 20–2, 26–7, 31; Agamben 677; Bachelard 172–3, 183; Badiou 692, 695–6; Bataille 341–2; Cixous 608; Derrida 553; Dufrenne 155, 158–9, 161–2, 164, 166–7, 170; Freud 309, 311–14, 317–18, 323–4; Gadamer 191; glossary 718, 721–2, 724–5, 728–31; Hegel 40–3, 45–58; Levinas 141–2, 144, 146; Lyotard 590–1, 594; de Man 576; Marcuse 263–6; Nancy 663, 668–9; Rancière 703–4, 708, 712; rational (Kant) 6, 20–1, 26–7, 31; Sartre 125–6, 129, 131–4; Vattimo 217–18
ideal: Butler 493–4, 496, 498–9, 501–2; Derrida 549–50; Dufrenne 167; Guattari 648; Hegel 42, 49–51, 53–57; Kant 30–1; Kristeva 398, 405; Levinas 145–6; Ricoeur 199, 201
idealism: Benjamin 445; Hegel 41; Heidegger 117; Kant 28–31; Kristeva 404–5; Marcuse 263–6; Marx 231; Merleau-Ponty 454; Nietzsche 63, 69–70; Vattimo 214
ideology: Adorno 239–40, 250; Bakhtin 270, 272, 274, 279–82, 292; Barthes 520; Baudrillard 480–1; Foucault 525, 536; glossary 724–5; Guattari 649, 654; Habermas 305; Lacan 353; de Man 573–4, 577–8; Marcuse 267; Ricoeur 199, 204; Vattimo 214–15, 218; Žižek 412, 422
idols 49, 145, 147–9, 434, 459, 483, 690
illusion: Adorno 241, 244, 250–3; Agamben 681–2; Bataille 345; Benjamin 439; Blanchot 331; Dufrenne 155–7, 166; Levinas 147; de Man 576–7; Merleau-Ponty 459, 462, 465–6, 469; Nietzsche 63, 66–69, 71; Rancière 710; Virilio 508, 511; Žižek 416
illustration: Adorno 237, 239, 251, 255; Benjamin 432, 435; Dufrenne 157, 167; Guattari 647–50; Hegel 48, 52, 57; Lacan 354, 356–8, 366; Sartre 129
image: Adorno 237–40, 244, 250–1; Agamben 674–5, 677, 680–3; Bachelard 173–84; Bakhtin 291–2; Baudrillard 477–84; Benjamin 423, 434–5, 437–8, 442, 445, 449; Blanchot 330, 333, 336; Dufrenne 155, 157–8, 162–4; Freud 311, 320–1, 323; glossary 723, 725, 727, 730; Kristeva 394, 396, 406; Lacan 358, 360; Levinas 141–8; Lyotard 586, 590–1; Marcuse 264,

267–8; Merleau-Ponty 452, 457, 459–61, 468, 470, 472–3; Nietzsche 64, 66–9, 73; Rancière 704–5, 708, 714; Sartre 127–8; Vattimo 216; Virilio 506–7, 509; Žižek 413, 416–17
imaginary: Bachelard 181; Badiou 692, 694–5; Baudrillard 480–5; Butler 488, 501–2; glossary 725, 728, 730–2; Guattari 648; Irigaray 383; Kristeva 388, 391, 394, 398, 402; Lacan 361, 365; Levinas 141–3; Merleau-Ponty 457, 459, 464; Ricoeur 199; Sartre 125–6;
imagination: Bachelard 174–82; Deleuze and Guattari 623, 638; Derrida 548, 559–61; Dufrenne 158, 164, 167, 170; Hegel 44, 50, 52–3, 57–8; Heidegger 113; Kant 4, 8, 12–13, 15, 19–22, 26–34; Levinas 140, 143; Lyotard 590; Marcuse 260, 264; Nietzsche 69
imitation: Adorno 242, 244–5, 248, 251; Badiou 691; Barthes 521–2; Benjamin 431; Butler 494, 500–1; Deleuze and Guattari 625, 630; Derrida 548, 563; Dufrenne 153–5, 157–8, 165, 168–9; Heidegger 96; Kant 10–11, 17–18, 22–23, 34; Levinas 144–5; Lyotard 590–2; de Man 576–7; Merleau-Ponty 467–8; Nancy 667; Nietzsche 67, 70, 73; Rancière 708; Sartre 133, 135; Žižek 417
immanence: Adorno 238, 243; Badiou 686, 691, 695, 697; Baudrillard 480, 484; Deleuze and Guattari 617–18, 627, 636; glossary 725, 732; Guattari 650–2; Merleau-Ponty 455, 470; Nancy 662–3, 665, 669
impressions: first 68, 71, 73, 599; perceptual 98, 153, 159, 178; sensory 32, 68, 507, 563
impressionism 8, 43, 467, 470, 621–2, 727
inaesthetic 688, 725
incorporeal 648–53
individuality: Adorno 240–2, 248; Bakhtin 275, 289; Baudrillard 479; Deleuze and Guattari 618, 634; Foucault 526–8, 536; Gadamer 189; Hegel 49–50, 53, 55; Marx 227, 229; Ricoeur 200
industry: Adorno 239, 241, 252, 254; Agamben 676; Baudrillard 480; Benjamin 447; culture 98, 238, 240–1, 433, 438–9, 445, 714; Deleuze and Guattari 620; Foucault 536; glossary 727; Heidegger 96, 98; introductions xiii, 221, 506; Marcuse 260; Marx 225, 230–1
ineffable 22, 140, 382, 676
information: body as 454, 463, 471; distinct from art or knowledge 110, 116, 158, 213, 215, 480–2, 508, 595; availability and control of 594, 648, 650
innovation 594–5
inside a metaphysics, system or text: Agamben 674–5; Bachelard 172–84; Derrida 547–8, 552–7, 560–1, 563; Heidegger 80, 111; Irigaray 383; Kristeva 389–90, 393, 396, 403; Merleau-Ponty 456–7, 459, 464, 466; Ricoeur 202; Vattimo 217
installation 703–6, 708
instant: Agamben 675–6, 680; Blanchot 333, 336; Cixous 599–600; Guattari 653; Lacan 357; Levinas 145–7; Lyotard 586, 594; Merleau-Ponty 459, 465, 468–9; Nancy 667; Virilio 509–11
instinct: Adorno 244–5, 254; Freud 312–3, 316, 322; Lacan 352, 260, 364, 366; Marcuse 261, 265–6, 268
instrument: Adorno 250, 254; Badiou 691, 693, 695; Benjamin 435, 442, 444; Butler 493, 497, 500; Habermas 301, 304; Irigaray 382, 384; Lacan 352, 361; Marcuse 260, 262, 267; Merleau-Ponty 457, 459, 464, 470; musical 551, 634–5; Rancière 705, 710; Sartre 126–7, 129–30, 136; Virilio 508–10; Žižek 412, 422
intellect 57, 65–6, 71, 237, 292, 662
intellectual: Adorno 236–7, 243, 245, 248; Bachelard 177; Badiou 694; Bakhtin 292; Baudrillard 479; Gadamer 188–9; Habermas 297, 299–300, 303–5; Hegel 47; Kant 20–21; Lacan 366; Levinas 149; Lyotard 587, 592; de Man 574, 578; Marcuse 265; Marx 229–30; Merleau-Ponty 454, 461, 471; Rancière 709
intention: Adorno 237–9, 243, 245, 247; Bachelard 177, 183; Bakhtin 272, 275, 277, 279–83, 287–92; Dufrenne 156, 159; Gadamer 189–91; glossary 722–4, 726, 729, 731; Heidegger 93, 97, 98; Kant 16, 22, 29, 31; Levinas 143; de Man 582–3; Marcuse 262–3; Ricoeur 196, 198, 201, 207; Sartre 130–1, 134–5
intentionality (experiential) 78, 312, 451, 627, 636, 643
interpretation: Bachelard 178, 180; Badiou 693; Baudrillard 479; Butler 496; Cixous 607; Derrida 558, 563; Dufrenne 158, 167–8, 171; Freud 309–12, 315; Gadamer 186–9, 191; glossary 724, 730; Habermas 303; Heidegger 80–1, 89–91, 93–5, 97–8, 112–14, 117, 119; Kristeva 392, 405–6; Lacan 361, 366; Levinas 140, 148–9; de Man 572, 576–77, 580; Merleau-Ponty 465; Ricoeur 195–209; Vattimo 217, 219
intersubjectivity 169, 366–7, 572, 725
intuition: Bachelard 174–8, 182, 184; Deleuze and Guattari 629; Derrida 559; Hegel 40, 42, 46, 52–3, 56; Kant 3–4, 6, 8, 13–14, 20, 22, 24–6, 31–2, 34, 36; Lyotard 590; de Man 575, 578; Marcuse 261, 265; Nietzsche 68, 72; Sartre 130, 136
invisible: Cixous 601; Deleuze and Guattari 622, 629, 637; Derrida 556; Heidegger 99; Kant 20; Merleau-Ponty 457, 459, 470; Rancière 706; Virilio 509
Irigaray, L. 351, 374–87, 493, 723, 728
irony 71, 216, 276, 284–91, 413–14, 423, 479–80, 661, 705

Jakobson, R. 270, 370, 574–6
Jameson, F. 8, 415
Jaspers, K. 166, 169–70, 242, 724
jouissance 364, 393–4, 400, 406, 412, 648, 665, 670
Joyce, J. 162, 400–1, 697, 727, 730
Judd, D. 704

judgment: Last 675, 680–2; logical form of 167, 191, 543–5, 558, 561–5, 627; *see also* aesthetic judgment
Jung, C.G. 320

Kafka, F.: Adorno 240, 250; Agamben 674, 677, 681–3; Cixous 605; Deleuze and Guattari 624, 630; Foucault 527; Guattari 648; Žižek 416
Kandinsky, W. 608, 629
Kant, I. 3–39; Adorno 235, 249–51; Derrida 541–67; Dufrenne 152, 166–7, 170–1; Freud 310, 312, 316; Gadamer 188; glossary 718–19, 721, 728–9, 731–2; Heidegger 79–81, 88, 93, 117; introductions 40–1, 62–3, 77–8, 295–6, 409, 617–18; Kristeva 389, 405; Lyotard 585–88, 590–3; de Man 575; Marcuse 261, 263, 265; Nancy 664, 668, 670; Rancière 702–4, 709; Vattimo 214–15, 218
Keats, J. 580–2
Kierkegaard, S. 192, 250, 343, 364, 530, 724
kitsch 212, 215–17, 241, 251–2, 595, 680, 682
Klee, P. Agamben 674, 677–8, 680; Deleuze and Guattari 621, 630, 635–6; Lyotard 590; Merleau-Ponty 458, 466–8, 470; Sartre 135; Virilio 506
Kokoschka, O. 240, 254, 598, 608–9
Kristeva, J. 388–408, 488–9, 491, 718, 723, 725, 730, 732

labour: Adorno 234, 246, 252–4; Benjamin 438; glossary 719, 722–3; Marx 223–7, 229–30, 232; Rancière 714
Lacan, J. 349–73; Badiou 690, 693, 699; Butler 488, 492, 497, 501–3; glossary 725, 727–8, 730–2; Guattari 643; Irigaray 374–86; Kristeva 388–9, 392, 394, 403; Lyotard 592; Žižek 409–10, 412–13, 416, 419–23
language: Adorno 239, 246–50; Agamben 672–4, 683; Bachelard 172, 174–5, 178–80; Badiou 686–7, 693; Bakhtin 270–93; Barthes 519–22; Bataille 339–40, 346; Baudrillard 477, 484; Benjamin 436, 441, 445; Blanchot 331–2, 335–6; Butler 488–9, 492–3, 501; Cixous 598–9, 603; Deleuze and Guattari 626; Derrida 540–1, 552, 564; Foucault 525–7, 536; Freud 311, 319; Gadamer 187, 189–92; glossary 722–4, 727–31; Guattari 644, 648; Habermas 298, 303; Heidegger 85, 100, 113–14, 116, 119; introductions xv–xviii, 43, 516–17; Irigaray 374–8, 380–6; Kant 8, 18, 20, 22, 32; Kristeva 388, 391–3, 395–7, 401–4, 406; Lacan 349–57, 359–60, 366–7, 370; Levinas 140–1, 146; Lyotard 587, 591–2, 594; de Man 570–2, 575–83; Marx 228, 231; Merleau-Ponty 457, 463, 473; Nancy 665–6; Nietzsche 66–7, 70; Ricoeur 195–9, 202–5, 207–8; Sartre 123, 125–32, 135–6; Vattimo 213, 215–17, 219
langue 196–7, 202, 270, 354, 370, 516
Leibniz, G.W. 3, 462, 617, 691, 725
Lessing, G. 33
Lévi-Strauss, C. 196, 203–4, 206, 349, 517
Levinas, E. 123, 139–51, 328, 336
libido 312, 319, 380, 481, 534
life-world xvii, 188, 299–300, 304–05, 725–6
light: Blanchot 331, 336–7; Cixous 598–603, 606–8, 611; Deleuze and Guattari 620–2, 624–5, 631, 634, 638; Dufrenne 161, 163; Heidegger 96–7, 99, 105, 112, 117–18; Levinas 142, 144; Merleau-Ponty 456–60, 463–7, 469–70; Virilio 508–9, 512
line: Bachelard 178; Deleuze and Guattari 621, 623, 629–34, 636; Derrida 558; Guattari 648, 653–4; Hegel 57; Lacan 356; Lyotard 592; Merleau-Ponty 457, 461–2, 465–8, 470, 472–3; Rancière 710
linguistics: Adorno 247–9; Bachelard 174–5; Bakhtin 270–2, 279–83, 286–90, 292; Barthes 521; Butler 488–9, 492, 502; Foucault 534; Gadamer 189–90, 192; glossary 723, 725, 730–2; Heidegger 88, 99, 107, 113; introductions xvii, 375–6, 516; Kristeva 388, 403; Lacan 350–1, 353, 355–6, 360–1, 369–70; de Man 570, 572, 574–80, 582–3; Ricoeur 195–7, 202–5
Lispector, C. 599–600, 604, 607, 610
Liszt, F. 633
literary theory 271, 570–83
literature: Adorno 238–40, 248; Bakhtin 270–93; Barthes 519–23; Benjamin 431, 438–9, 441, 445; Blanchot 327, 329, 331–2; Cixous 598–9; Deleuze and Guattari 623, 629, 632, 634–5, 638; Dufrenne 162; Foucault 526–7, 531–3, 536; Habermas 301–2; Kristeva 389, 391, 397–406; Lacan 366, 369; Levinas 140–1, 146, 149; Lyotard 588; de Man 570–82; Merleau-Ponty 471; Ricoeur 196, 199, 202; Sartre 125, 131–5
Livingston, J. 490, 496, 499–500
Locke, J. 3, 32
logic: Adorno 243; Bachelard 174, 179; Bakhtin 277, 279, 286, 291; Barthes 520; Baudrillard 478–9, 481–2, 484–5; Benjamin 443; Butler 495, 501–2; Derrida 546, 551, 557–64; Dufrenne 160, 164, 167; Foucault 535; Freud 315; Habermas 295–6, 300–1, 303; Hegel 49; Heidegger 87, 91, 96; introduction xvii; Irigaray 377–80, 382–3, 385; Kant 11–13, 15, 19, 21, 26, 28, 31, 33; Kristeva 391, 394–7, 405–6; Lacan 359, 361; Levinas 149; de Man 570, 575, 578–83; Merleau-Ponty 469; Nietzsche 67–8; Rancière 703, 705–6, 711, 714–15; Ricoeur 200–1, 203–4, 206–7; Žižek 415–16, 420, 422
Longinus, D. 588–9, 731
love: Adorno 236, 246; Badiou 688; Blanchot 330; Butler 495, 503; Cixous 598–601, 605–11; Deleuze and Guattari 625–6; Dufrenne 160; Freud 312; Irigaray 377, 382–3, 385–6; Kant 20; Kristeva 392, 395, 400–1; Lacan 359, 363; Marx 230; Sartre 128, 131, 134; Žižek 413–14, 416
Lúkacs, G. 259, 724
Lyotard, J.-F. 515–16, 585–97, 701, 703–5, 714, 731

McLuhan, M. 482, 484
magic: Agamben 680; Adorno 249–52; Barthes 519; Baudrillard 479, 481; Benjamin 434, 435, 439; Blanchot 332; Cixous 600, 602; Dufrenne 163; Guattari 649; Habermas 299; Lacan 366; Levinas 141, 145–7; Merleau-Ponty 458–60, 468; Sartre 127–8, 136
male domination 266, 268, 374
Mallarmé, S.: Barthes 519, 520–1; Benjamin 434; Deleuze and Guattari 639–40; Dufrenne 162; Foucault 529; Kristeva 401; Levinas 140; Lyotard 594; Nancy 668–69; Rancière 710, 713
Malraux, A. 133, 135, 164, 329, 452
Man, P. de 540–1, 570–84, 722
Marcuse, H. 212, 214, 222, 234, 258–69, 294
Marinetti, F.T. 443–4, 694
marriage 226, 267, 293, 399, 405
Marx, K. 221–33; Adorno 234, 253; Badiou 693; Benjamin 431; Foucault 534–5; glossary 719, 721–2, 724; Habermas 303; introductions 258–9, 270–1, 295, 409, 477, 701; Lyotard 594; de Man 577; Marcuse 258–9, 261–7; Nancy 664; Rancière 710–12
masculinity: Butler 488, 495–6, 500, 502; Irigaray 380, 385; Kristeva 388, 401; Žižek 412, 416
master–servant 108, 265, 349
materialism 230, 234, 262–5; dialectical 264, 308, 409, 693, 722; historical 263
mathematics xv, 686–7, 727; Benjamin 448; Deleuze and Guattari 633; Derrida 562–3; Foucault 531, 533; Gadamer 188; Guattari 647; Hegel 57; Kant 10; Lacan 354, 362; de Man 579; Marcuse 264; Merleau-Ponty 471; Nietzsche 68, 70; Sartre 132; Žižek 412, 422
matriarchy 266, 399
Mattise, H. 459, 467–8, 506, 628
Maupassant, G. de 159
Mauss, M. 342–3
meaning: Adorno 238–9, 248, 250–1; Agamben 676–7, 681; Bachelard 179, 182–3; Bakhtin 271–3, 275–8, 290–1; Barthes 519, 521–2; Baudrillard 478, 480–5; Derrida 540–1, 547, 551, 556; Dufrenne 155–7, 159, 163–5; Foucault 528–33, 536; Freud 309–12, 314, 321; Gadamer 187, 188–91; Hegel 49–57; introductions 77–8, 374–6, 488–9, 516–17, 657–8, 686–7; Kristeva 388, 390–1, 394–6, 400–1, 404–6; Lacan 350–1, 354, 356–7, 363–4, 370; de Man 574–7, 580–2; Merleau-Ponty 454–5, 459, 465, 470; Nietzsche 68–9; Ricoeur 195–6, 198–209; Sartre 125–32, 136–7; Vattimo 216, 219; Žižek 410, 419, 422
meanwhile 139, 144–8
memory: Bachelard 180, 183; Baudrillard 482; Deleuze and Guattari 622–4, 626, 638–9; Freud 310–11, 314, 318, 321, 323; Habermas 298; Kristeva 392, 394–5, 400, 402; Lacan 355, 364; Ricoeur 198, 201
Merleau-Ponty, M. 451–76; Deleuze and Guattari 638; Dufrenne 170; introductions xv, 427–8, 506, 619; 658; Lyotard 593; Sartre 125
metaphor: Bachelard 173, 174, 179; Bakhtin 289–91; Baudrillard 483; Derrida 540–2, 544; Gadamer 188–9; glossary 722, 726; Heidegger 85–6; Lacan 350–1, 358–60, 362–4, 369, 371; Nietzsche 64, 67–71, 73
metonymy: Derrida 552; Lacan 350–1, 357–60, 362–4, 369, 371; de Man 580; Nietzsche 67, 70
Michaux, H. 176–8, 466, 638
Miller, H. 623–4
mimesis: Adorno 240; Badiou 691–2; Baudrillard 479; Derrida 548, 563; glossary 729; Kant 8, 31; Kristeva 394, 396, 404–6; de Man 577–8; Nancy 666–7
mimicry 272, 278, 285, 383, 405, 457, 551, 648
minimalism 593
Miro, J. 621
mirror stage 365, 388, 501, 725
mirrors: Adorno 236, 240–1, 251; Baudrillard 478–9, 482; Benjamin 438; Deleuze and Guattari 623, 627–8; Habermas 302; Hegel 55; Heidegger 90; Kristeva 394; Merleau-Ponty 456, 458–60, 472; Sartre 127–8; Žižek 416
Mitsein 657, 726
Modern Language Association (MLA) 571
modernism 8, 327, 389, 429, 515–16, 707, 710–11, 726–7
modernity: Adorno 247–8; Barthes 521; Baudrillard 483; glossary 726–7; Guattari 646; Habermas 295–305; Kristeva 403; Lyotard 587; Rancière 704, 711, 714–15
Molière 146, 149, 163
monad 241–2, 645, 651–4
Montaigne, M. 134–5,
montage 411–21
monuments 159–61, 189–90, 621–2, 624–7, 630–1, 635–7, 660; written monuments 200–1
morality: Agamben 673–4, 681–2; Baudrillard 478–84; Derrida 543, 553; glossary 720–1, 724, 729, 731–2; Habermas 295–305; Kant 3, 6–7, 11, 31–4, 36; Kristeva 391, 397–401; Lacan 366–7; Marcuse 266–7; Nietzsche 66,68; *see also* ethics
mother: Butler 498–500; glossary 725, 727–8, 731–2; Irigaray 374–5, 377, 380, 384; Kristeva 388, 390, 392, 396, 401, 404; Lacan 353, 366, 368; Marcuse 266–7; Žižek 418–9
Mozart, W.A. 153, 160, 169, 244,
Mullarkey, J. 687
music: Adorno 234, 242–3, 249–50; Badiou 690, 697–8; Benjamin 447–8; Deleuze and Guattari 620–4, 626, 629–30, 633–5, 639–40; Derrida 549, 563, 567; Dufrenne 162, 164–5; Guattari 645, 647; Hegel 42, 56–8; Heidegger 88, 113; Kant 16, 20, 33; Levinas 140–2, 146; Lyotard 587, 594; de Man 577, 579; Marx 229–30; Merleau-Ponty 454–5; Nietzsche 67, 73; Rancière 705, 707; Sartre 125–7, 131; Virilio 510

naming: Badiou 698; Butler 501; Derrida 558; Heidegger 101, 107, 113–4; Kristeva 395; Lacan 353–4; Sartre 125–6, 130
Nancy, J.-L. 615–16, 657–71, 688, 691, 726
narcissism: Adorno 244; Freud 318–19, 322; Habermas 300; Irigaray 382, 384; Kristeva 396–7, 399–400; Lacan 365
narrative: Barthes 520; Butler 494, 500; Dufrenne 162, 165; Foucault 527, 530–1; Kristeva 402–3; Levinas 146; de Man 577, 580–1; Ricoeur 195–6, 203–7
nature: Adorno 250–1, 253; Deleuze and Guattari 622–4, 630–1, 639; Derrida, 542, 545–6, 554, 561; Gadamer 187–8, 191; glossary 729, 731; Hegel 40–59; Heidegger 101, 112; introduction xiv–xv; Kant 3–36; Lacan 353, 358, 367; Lyotard 590, 592; Marcuse 258–68; Marx 221, 223–5, 226–32; Merleau-Ponty 454, 456, 458, 463, 466, 469–70, 473; Nietzsche 64–71; Ricoeur 200, 202
neoconservatism 296, 299–300, 304–5, 422
neuroses 244, 309–11, 318–22, 365–6, 392–3
New Criticism 520, 540, 573–4, 582, 722
Newman, B.B. 586–7, 593, 703–5,
Nietzsche, F. 62–75; Adorno 245, 251; Badiou 693, 697; Bataille 343; Blanchot 331; Deleuze and Guattari 617, 624; Derrida 546–7; Foucault 528; glossary 720, 725, 728; Guattari 648; Heidegger 120; introduction xiv–xv, xvii–xviii; de Man 575; Nancy 660, 668; Vattimo 213, 217–18
nihilism 63, 123, 217, 381, 663, 690, 694, 704
Norris, C. 687
nostalgia 409–23, 480, 482, 484–5
nothingness: Bachelard 175, 177; Blanchot 332–3, 336; Guattari 651–2; Levinas 147; Lyotard 587, 591; Sartre 123; Virilio 510–11
noumena 5, 40, 62–3, 732; *see also* things in themselves
novels: Adorno 239, 241, 244, 249; Agamben 677; Badiou 697–8; Bakhtin 271–93; Barthes 521; Benjamin 437; Deleuze and Guattari 620, 623–5, 632; Dufrenne 154–6, 159–62, 165, 170; Foucault 532–4; Levinas 146–7
nuances 128, 176, 247–8

objectivity: Adorno 237–8, 241–5, 247–8, 251–2; Bachelard 179, 182; Badiou 693, 696–7; Bakhtin 277, 279, 282, 284, 285, 287, 289, 292; Derrida 545–6, 548–9, 554; Dufrenne 153, 155–6, 158, 160–2, 165–70; glossary 721, 724–5, 728; Habermas 301, 304; Hegel 41, 43, 51, 54, 56–7; Heidegger 81–2, 100–1, 117; introductions xvi, xviii, 2, 78; Kant 3–5, 7, 10–15, 19–20, 22–8, 30–4, 36; Kristeva 394, 403; Levinas 141; Marcuse 262–6; Marx 224–6, 228–31; Merleau-Ponty 461, 465, 471; Ricoeur 196, 200–1, 207; Sartre 130, 133–4, 136; Vattimo 217; Žižek 412, 418, 422
objet petit a 410–11, 694, 699, 727
Oedipus: glossary 725, 727–8, 730–2; introductions 388, 488–9; Irigaray 374–5, 377; Lacan 365; Ricoeur 203, 206; Sartre 134
ontology: Bachelard 172–7; Dufrenne 156, 158; glossary 719–21, 725–8; Guattari 644–5, 649–51, 653–4; Heidegger 79–85, 93, 118; introduction xiii, xvi, xviii, 42–3, 123–4, 223–4, 488–90, 615–16, 657–8, 686–9; Levinas 139, 141–5; Merleau-Ponty 451–2, 461–2, 470; Vattimo 212, 214, 219
opening up of a world: Agamben 680, 682; Bachelard 173, 179–80; Butler 497; Deleuze and Guattari 633, 636, 639; Dufrenne 157, 168; Heidegger 80–1, 83, 85, 94, 97–8, 100, 102, 105–6, 108–14; Merleau-Ponty 461, 469; Nancy 662, 665, 668–9; Vattimo 219
optics 437, 440–1, 443, 449, 466, 468, 621–2
oratory 15, 20–1, 35, 276
ornamentation 188–9, 541, 551–2, 554
other: Badiou 699; glossary 727; Guattari 644, 652; Hegel 41, 46; introductions xvi, xviii, 139; Kristeva 389–90, 392, 394, 396–7, 400, 404; Lacan 349–50, 367–9; Nancy 658–61; Žižek 409–14, 416–17, 421–2
Other: Badiou 694; Butler 495; glossary 727; introduction 139; Lacan 367–9; Irigaray 378–85; Kristeva 393–9; Nancy 665; Rancière 705, 707, 714–15; Žižek 411–12, 421–2
outside a metaphysics, system or text: Agamben 675, 677, 680; Bachelard 172–84; Badiou 688, 691; Bakhtin 273, 288, 291, 293; Barthes 520–1; Blanchot 330–4; Butler 499–501, 509; Deleuze and Guattari 631, 634, 646; Derrida 541, 547–9, 552–7, 560–1, 566; Heidegger 98, 111; Kristeva 389–91, 393, 395–6, 398, 401, 403; Levinas 140, 142, 144, 146; Marx 223, 231; Merleau-Ponty 457, 459–64, 466–7, 469, 472–3; Nancy 658, 662; Ricoeur 199, 202; Sartre 127, 129–30

paganism 145, 147, 297, 398, 634, 669
painting: Adorno 249, 251; Agamben 677–80; Baudrillard 483–4; Benjamin 435–6, 439–42, 444–6, 448; Blanchot 328–9; Cixous 598–612; Deleuze and Guattari 620–32, 634–9; Derrida 549, 552, 554–7; Dufrenne 153, 156–59, 161–2, 169; Habermas 297, 302; Hegel 42–3, 56–8; Heidegger 84–5, 87–8, 94–6, 101, 105, 107, 113; Kant 19, 21–2; Levinas 140, 142, 144, 148; Lyotard 586–8, 591–5; Merleau-Ponty 452–74; Nancy 663, 669; Rancière 704–07, 710, 713; Sartre 125–8, 131, 135
paradox: Agamben 681–2; Badiou 693, 695; Bataille 345; Baudrillard 484; Butler 493, 495, 498, 502; Dufrenne 164; Levinas 142, 145, 147; Lyotard 588, 592; Merleau-Ponty 456, 461, 469; Nancy 662, 666; Rancière 707–8, 711, 715; Virilio 509–11; Žižek 413, 415, 422
parergon 541, 551–67
Paris Is Burning 490, 493–501
parody 272, 274–83, 287–8, 291, 492, 494

parole 196–7, 202, 271, 516
participation: Adorno 250, 252; Benjamin 442; Dufrenne 153, 159, 163; Heidegger 92; Levinas 141–2, 144, 146; Merleau-Ponty 461, 470; Rancière 705, 707
particularity: Adorno 237; Bakhtin 281; glossary 721; Hegel 42, 47, 53–4, 56; introductions 598, 617, 658; Marx 228
Pascal, B. 71, 73, 132, 135, 166, 170, 461, 589, 651
past: Adorno 242; Agamben 674–7, 680–3; Bachelard 177, 179–80, 183; Benjamin 440, 446; Blanchot 331, 336; Dufrenne 156, 162; Gadamer 188–90; Guattari 646; Habermas 297–9; Heidegger 116; Levinas 141, 146; Lyotard 586–7; Marcuse 264; Marx 227; Merleau-Ponty 456, 465, 470; Vattimo 215–16; Virilio 415
pastiche 595
patriarchy 266–8, 374–7, 388, 598, 723
Paz, O. 299, 302
Peirce, C.S. 208, 575, 730
Pellerin, J. 179
percept 618–40, 647–9, 695, 732
perception: Adorno 247, 250, 252; Bakhtin 288, 291; Benjamin 433–4, 440, 443–4, 449; Deleuze and Guattari 618–32, 636–8; Derrida 550, 563; Dufrenne 154, 157, 160–1, 166, 169; Freud 309–10, 316, 321–3; glossary 723, 725, 727–30; Hegel 40–3, 46, 48, 54; Heidegger 82–4, 90–1, 100; introduction xiii–xviii; Irigaray 383–4; Kant 8, 13, 33; Levinas 140, 142–3; Lyotard 592–3; Marcuse 264–5; Marx 224, 231–2; de Man 575, 577; Merleau-Ponty 451–3, 459–60, 466, 473; Nietzsche 62–4, 68–70; Rancière 701–2, 706, 708, 714; Vattimo 218–19; Virilio 506–11
perfection: Adorno 250–2; Badiou 696; Baudrillard 484–5; Hegel 45, 48–9, 51–3, 55; Kant 8, 15, 18–19, 24–5, 28–9; Levinas 140, 143, 145; Lyotard 589–90; Merleau-Ponty 466, 473; Rancière 708–9
performance 157, 436–7, 444, 448, 494, 496–8, 501, 661, 693, 705, 708
performativity: Barthes 521; Butler 489–92, 494, 496, 498, glossary 728; introductions xv, xvii–xviii, 234, 428, 517; de Man 582–3
perversity 364, 382, 392, 397–8, 411–7, 422, 478–9
phallus 366, 375, 384, 396, 493, 499–500, 502, 728
phallocentrism 375, 384, 598, 728, 730
philistines 244, 246–8
photography: Adorno 238–9; Baudrillard 478; Benjamin 432, 434–6, 440–1, 449; glossary 719, 723, 727; Merleau-Ponty 468–9; Rancière 704–5; Vattimo 214–15
Physiocrats 225, 594
physiology 12, 51, 177, 202, 261–2, 314, 591, 625
Picasso, P. 126, 128, 440, 592, 663
picnolepsy 506–8
Plato: Badiou 690–3, 697; Butler 493; Derrida 547; glossary 720, 722, 724, 726, 732; Guattari 650; introductions 1, 40, 63, 79, 86, 234, 339; Irigaray 375, 383; Kristeva 396, 404–5; Lacan 364, 366; Levinas 141, 144; Lyotard 589; de Man 576; Rancière 706–7, 709; Sartre 133
play: Adorno 252; Bakhtin 278, 280–1, 288–90, 292; Derrida 551–3, 565–7; Foucault 527–9; Heidegger 105–6; Kant 13, 16, 19–20, 22, 27, 30; Levinas 142; Rancière 707–9, 713; Ricoeur 202–3, 206
plays: Adorno 239, 247, 254; Benjamin 437, 439, 446; Dufrenne 153, 156–7, 159–60, 162; Rancière 693
pleasure: Adorno 236, 246, 250, 252; Baudrillard 483, 485; Benjamin 444; Butler 495, 501; Derrida 542–9, 557, 560, 562–3, 565; Gadamer 188; Hegel 44, 46; Irigaray 376, 378–85; Kant 4, 7, 12–17, 21, 24, 27, 32; Kristeva 404; Lacan 364; Lyotard 587, 589–93; Nancy 664–5, 667, 670; Rancière 706, 714; Sartre 131, 134; Vattimo 215–6; Žižek 412–3, 419–20, 422
pleasure principle 310–1, 367; 565
Poe, E.A. 147, 511
poetics: Adorno 239; Agamben 682; Bachelard 172–84; Bakhtin 274–5, 279, 281, 283, 286–7, 289–92; Barthes 521; Blanchot 330; Derrida 552; Dufrenne 161, 165; Foucault 531–3; glossary 726; Habermas 304; Heidegger 113–5; Kristeva 404–6; Lacan 359, 363; Levinas 142; Lyotard 587–91; de Man 576, 582; Marcuse 260, 264; Merleau-Ponty 463; Nietzsche 67; Sartre 127–9; Vattimo 214–15
poetry: Adorno 240, 249; Agamben 676; Bachelard 172–84; Badiou 690, 693, 695, 697–8; Bakhtin 287, 290, 292–3; Benjamin 434; Blanchot 328–31, 333, 335–7; Cixous 600, 604–6, 609–10; Hegel 42–3, 56–8; Heidegger 85, 96, 101, 113–6, 119; Kant 8, 10–11, 15, 17, 20–21, 35; Lacan 356–60; Levinas 142–44, 146, 148; Lyotard 591; de Man 573, 576; Merleau-Ponty 458; Nancy 668–9; Rancière 707, 710, 713; Sartre 126–30, 132; Vattimo 216
political economy 231, 239, 241
politics: Adorno 238–42, 245, 247–8; Agamben 672–3, 676; Badiou 686, 688, 693, 695; Bataille 341; Benjamin 431, 434, 435, 438, 443–4, 447; Baudrillard 479–80, 484; Butler 488–90, 493; Derrida 547, 556; Guattari 647, 650, 654; Habermas 299, 303–5; Irigaray 385; Kristeva 401; Lacan 353, 369; Lyotard 586, 588, 594; de Man 574, 577; Marcuse 260–1, 265; Marx 227, 230–1; Rancière 701–16; Sartre 129, 135; Vattimo 214–5
pornography 339, 409–10, 413–4, 417, 419, 422
positivism 197, 309–11, 354, 520, 574, 594, 721
possibilities, generative or emancipatory: Bachelard 173, 177; Blanchot 330–5; Butler 490, 492–4, 497; Deleuze and Guattari 633; Foucault 534; Gadamer 188; Heidegger 80–1, 85, 108, 120; Marcuse 264–5; Ricoeur 206; Vattimo 213, 319
postcards 251
postmodernism 304, 409, 415, 515–18, 578, 729

postmodernity 295–305, 707, 711, 714–5
poststructuralism 515–18, 729
potentiality 161, 170, 264, 652, 654, 672–3
Pouillon, J. 146, 161
pragmatism 572–3, 575, 578, 583, 714
praxis 229, 252, 265–6, 301–4, 353, 650, 665, 676
presence: Benjamin 432–3, 437; Blanchot 330, 335–6, Derrida 563, 565; Gadamer 188; Heidegger 89, 99, 117, 120; Levinas 144–6; Merleau-Ponty 456–7, 462, 464, 469–70; Nancy 660–3, 665, 667; Rancière 704, 707; Vattimo 217–18
present (time): Agamben 676–7, 680–2; Deleuze and Guattari 622; Gadamer 187–8, 190–2; Guattari 646; Habermas 297–9; Kristeva 391; Levinas 142–7; Lyotard 586; Merleau-Ponty 454; Ricoeur 204–6; Žižek 415
presentation: Freud 321–4; Gadamer 190; Hegel 47, 49–50, 52, 57; Kant 8, 12–15, 19–34, 36; Lyotard 590–1; Merleau-Ponty 462, 467; Nancy 658, 660–5, 667–9; Rancière 704–5
preservation: Benjamin 432, 438, 443; Deleuze and Guattari 620–3, 632; Gadamer 190; Heidegger 98, 101, 110–15, 119; Ricoeur 198, 200; Vattimo 217
private property 223–33, 262, 536
prose: Adorno 248–9; Agamben 697–8; Bachelard 176; Bakhtin 279–83, 286–92; Nancy 669–70; Sartre 126, 128–33, 135–7
prostitution 226, 233, 493
Proudhon, P.-J. 225
Proust, M. 146, 400–1, 521, 527, 576, 622, 625, 627, 629, 632
psychoanalysis: Bachelard 175, 178, 182; Badiou 693–4; Benjamin 440–1; Butler 497, 501, 503; Foucault 534–5; Freud 316, 319; glossary 723, 725, 727–8, 730–1; Guattari 649, 654; Irigaray 377–81, 383, 385–6; Kristeva 391, 397; Lacan 352, 354, 360–2, 364, 366–70
psychology: Adorno 236, 238–9, 244–5, 247, 253; Bachelard 175, 178, 181–2; Barthes 520–1, 523; Baudrillard 479–80, 484; Dufrenne 155, 164; Foucault 532, 536; Freud 309–12, 314–15, 317–18; Hegel 45; Lacan 362, 367, 369–70; Levinas 142, 146–7; de Man 575, 583; Marx 230; Merleau-Ponty 464, 470; Ricoeur 197–8, 200–2, 204, 208; Žižek 415, 418
purism 132
Puritanism 485
purposiveness: Derrida 567; glossary 729; Kant 4–9, 12–16, 19–20, 22, 25, 27–33, 35; Lyotard 589; Marcuse 263, 266
Pushkin, A. 281, 287, 291

quale 470

Rabelais, F. 270–1, 279–81, 292, 632
Racine, J. 132, 153, 156, 160, 169, 370
Rancière, J. 699, 701–17
rationality: Adorno 237, 251; Derrida 558, 562; Habermas 299–302, 304; Hegel 47–48; Heidegger 90–1; Kant 3, 6–7, 20–21, 26–29, 31; Marcuse 260–1; Nancy 662; Nietzsche 68, 71–2
rationalism 3, 28–9, 31, 520, 719, 721
reading: Barthes 522–3; Butler 496–7; Derrida 550–1; Lacan 360; Merleau-Ponty 463–4; de Man 572, 576–83; Ricoeur 198–209; Sartre 132–3
realism 28–31, 140, 238–9, 364, 478–9, 485
reciprocity: Bachelard 176; Dufrenne 166; Kant 12–13; Nancy 662, 665; Ricoeur 200, 205; Sartre 127–8
reference: Baudrillard 478, 482, 485; Butler 492, 502; Deleuze and Guattari 612, 636; Foucault 528–9, 531, 536; Guattari 645–52; Lacan 362; de Man 575–8, 582–3; Ricoeur 199–202, 205–06
reflection: Adorno 236, 240, 253; Bataille 341, 344; Baudrillard 479; Dufrenne 165–6; Hegel 45, 55; Levinas 144, 146; Merleau-Ponty 458–60, 467; Ricoeur 205
refraction (Bakhtin) 270, 272–3, 275, 277, 279–83, 287–90, 724
relational 99, 224–32, 259–62, 264–8, 630–6, 645–53, 705–6, 708
religion: Bataille 343, 345; Benjamin 433–4; Deleuze and Guattari 627, 634, 638; Foucault 529, 531, 533; Guattari 645–6; Habermas 299, 301; Hegel 47, 52, 54, 58; Kristeva 397–9, 404, 406; Marx 227, 230, 232; Nancy 663, 668–9
Rembrandt 153, 433, 444, 604–5, 607–9, 627
Renaissance: Benjamin 434, 442, 448; Blanchot 329; Guattari 646, 649; Habermas 296–7, 301; introduction 5, 8; Levinas 149; de Man 578; Merleau-Ponty 462–3, 465; Virilio 511
representation: Adorno 237–8; Badiou 694; Barthes 521; Baudrillard 477–9, 483–4; Benjamin 439; Deleuze and Guattari 634; Derrida 546–7, 551–2, 554, 557, 559–60, 563; Dufrenne 152–70; Hegel 41–3, 47–51, 55–8; Heidegger 84–5, 91–2, 94, 98, 103–4, 118; Levinas 142–4; Lyotard 590–3; Merleau-Ponty 455, 461, 466, 468; Nietzsche 62–4, 70; Rancière 704, 708
repression 266–7, 310–11, 313, 318–19, 321–2, 392, 394–8
reproduction: Adorno 238, 251, 253; Deleuze and Guattari 637; Heidegger 96; Irigaray 377, 381, 384–5; Lacan 359, 364; Levinas 146; Marcuse 261, 263, 265, 267; mechanical 215, 218–19, 241, 429–49, 478, 508, 647–48, 676, 719, 727; Ricoeur 201
resemblance: Badiou 692; Baudrillard 478–9, 484; Deleuze and Guattari 621–2, 625; Derrida 563; Dufrenne 159–60; Freud 321; Levinas 143–5; Merleau-Ponty 460; Sartre 127
revelation 141, 144, 146–7, 227, 231, 299, 359
revolution 214–15, 227, 258–68, 368, 438, 481, 626–7, 676, 682, 709–15
rhetoric 289–91, 400–1, 545, 552, 576, 578–83, 588–90, 627

rhizome 644–5, 648, 653, 730
rhythm: Adorno 236, 248–9; Blanchot 330, 333; Deleuze and Guattari 623, 626; Dufrenne 159, 162; Guattari 647, 651; Kristeva 401, 404–5; Levinas 142–3, 146–8; Vattimo 219; Virilio 509–10
Ricoeur, P. 195–211
Rilke, R. 178, 183, 240, 328–30, 332–3, 469
Rimbaud, A. 129, 132, 134, 165, 169
Rockhill, G. 701
Rodin, A. 468–9, 471, 625
romantic: Adorno 248; Badiou 691–6; Bakhtin 287; Barthes 520–1; Bataille 341; glossary 718, 724; Habermas 298; Hegel 40–3, 52–3, 56–8; Lyotard 587–8, 591–2, 594; Nancy 659–61; Ricoeur 201
romanticism 201, 248, 587–8, 591–2, 660, 692, 694
Rousseau, J.-J. 134–5, 691
Rubens, P.P. 621, 635
rules: Badiou 692–3, 696; Benjamin 442; Cixous 605–6; Derrida 542–3, 545, 550–1, 553, 561–2; Foucault 527, 531–2, 534–6; Lyotard 587–94; Kant 11–12, 14, 16–20, 22–23, 26–27, 31–32; Kristeva 390–1, 397, 404; Lacan 361–2, 368; Nancy 664; Ricoeur 202–3

sacred: Adorno 244, 249; Bachelard 179–80; Bataille 341, 343–4; Blanchot 331, 336; Foucault 529, 531; Habermas 301; Kristeva 392, 398, 400, 403–4
Sade, Marquis de 133, 380, 400, 412, 528
sadism 411–13, 420–1
sadness 405–6
Saint-Simon, Comte de 225
sanctity 339–46,
Sartre, J.-P. 123–38, 155, 459, 574, 724
Saussure, F. de 195–7, 203, 349–50, 353, 356, 360, 534, 574–5, 730–1
scenery 157, 159–60, 170
Schelling, F.W.J. 712
Schilder, P. 459, 472
Schiller, F. von 238–9, 302, 707–11
schizophrenia 254, 318–22, 324
Schlegel, F. 660
Schleiermacher, F.D.E. 201, 205
scholarship 571–2
Schopenhauer, A. 62–4
science: Badiou 688, 693, 695; Benjamin 440–1, 448; Butler 494, 500; Deleuze and Guattari 622, 631, 634–7; Dufrenne 158, 166–7; Foucault 531, 533–6; glossary 721, 723, 730; Guattari 646–7, 649–50, 652–4; Habermas 295–7, 301, 304–5; Hegel 44–8, 52; Heidegger 98, 101, 108, 111, 117; Irigaray 378, 383–5; Kant 5, 8, 12, 15, 17–18, 20, 22, 31, 34; Kristeva 391, 393, 399; Lacan 353, 361, 363–6, 368–9; Levinas 140–1, 148; de Man 575, 578–82; Marcuse 260, 262, 264; Marx 228, 230–1; Merleau-Ponty 452–4, 464, 469, 471, 473; Nietzsche 67, 69–71, Ricoeur 196–7, 200–2, 204–5; Virilio 506, 509
sculpture: Adorno 249; Benjamin 435; Deleuze and Guattari 621–2, 625–6, 631, 635; Derrida 549, 556; Hegel 42, 55–8; Heidegger 87, 98–9, 101, 113; Kant 19, 21; Lyotard 586; Merleau-Ponty 467, 471; Rancière 707–9, 711, 713; Sartre 125–6
seduction: Badiou 691; Baudrillard 478–9; Butler 496, 498; Cixous 604; Derrida 546, 549, 554, 557, 561–2; Irigaray 380, 386, 389; de Man 574, 576–7, 582
semantics: Bakhtin 275–6, 278, 280, 283, 286–9, 291; de Man 577, 580–1; Ricoeur 204, 206–8
semiotics: glossary, 725, 730–2; Guattari 648, 651, 654; introductions 388–9, 488–9; de Man 575, 579–80, 582
Sénéchal, C. 178
sensations: Badiou 695; Deleuze and Guattari 618–23, 625–38; Derrida 551, 563; Freud 320; Hegel 44–5; Heidegger 91, 93; Irigaray 381–2; Kant 12–16, 19, 21, 31, 33–4; Kristeva 390, 399, 403; Levinas 142–3; Lyotard 586, 592–3; Nancy 662; Nietzsche 67, 70; Rancière 702, 709; Virilio 510
senses: Badiou 691; Dufrenne 157; Hegel 53; Heidegger 91; Kant 5, 28; Marcuse 258, 260–3, 265–6; Marx 225, 229–30; Nancy 657–8, 662, 664–5, 667–8, 670; Nietzsche 65–6; Rancière 702, 709; Sartre 130, 133
sensibility: Adorno 240, 247; Badiou 695; Deleuze and Guattari 628, 630; Guattari 643, 647–8, 651–2, 654; Heidegger 91; Kant 3–6, 9, 20–1, 24–5, 27, 31–4, 36; Levinas 141–4; Lyotard 588, 590, 595; Marcuse 258–62, 265–8; Merleau-Ponty 454, 456, 459; Nancy 659, 662–5, 668–9; Rancière 701–15
sensus communis 564, 593, 702
setting forth 100–2, 107
sex 240, 246,
sexuality: Adorno 240, 246; Bataille 339, 341–3, 345; Baudrillard 484; Butler 488–9, 493–5, 497–503; Deleuze and Guattari 625, 630; glossary 722–3, 727–8; Guattari 648, 653; Irigaray 374–9, 381–6; Kristeva 398–401, 403–5; Lacan 364–7; Marcuse 260, 267; Žižek 413–14, 417, 422
shadow 139, 141, 143–5, 147–8, 458–9, 621, 624, 635
Shakespeare, W. 133, 146, 149, 370, 399, 433, 529–30, 607
signification: Butler 492, 497, 500–1; Dufrenne 154, 156, 160, 163, 166, 168; Foucault 529, 536; glossary 728–30; Lacan 350, 352–64; de Man 575; Nancy 664–5, 667, 670
silence: Bachelard 183; Bataille 340, 345–6; Irigaray 379, 381, 384–5; Kristeva 405; Levinas 140, 148; Lyotard 589, 591; Sartre 130–1, 134, 137; Vattimo 216–17
simulacrum 460, 466, 477–8, 481, 484, 648, 714, 730
simulation 481, 485, 730
skill 17–18, 49, 415, 455, 625, 708; *see also* craft

Smollett, T. 274, 279
socialism 221, 231–2, 242, 258, 261–2, 264, 266, 434, 594, 692–3
socialization 241, 267, 300
sociology 166, 198, 202, 217, 274, 342, 479
solipsism 166, 250, 654
solitude 180, 182, 336, 339–46, 591, 624, 706–7, 711, 713–14
soul: Cixous 600, 603, 607, 609; Dufrenne 162, 165, 167; Guattari 647; Hegel 45, 48, 51, 55, 57–8; Irigaray 381–2, 385; Kant 3, 6, 20; Kristeva 404–5; Lacan 355, 365–6, 371–2; Levinas 143–4, 149; Lyotard 591–2; Merleau-Ponty 460, 463–4, 469; Sartre 125–6, 128, 134–5; Virilio 509–10
sound: Adorno 238, 249, 252; Bachelard 175, 181, 183; Baudrillard 480, 482; Benjamin 432–3, 437, 439, 442, 445, 449; Cixous 603, 609; Deleuze and Guattari 621–2, 626, 630, 633, 635; Derrida 551, 562–3; Dufrenne 160–2, 165; Hegel 42, 56–7; Heidegger 88, 91; Levinas 142–3; de Man 576–7; Nietzsche 64, 66–7, 69–70, 73; Ricoeur 203, 208; Sartre 125, 127–8, 135; Virilio 508, 510, 512
space: Adorno 245; Agamben 674, 676, 680–3; Bachelard 176–8, 181–4; Bakhtin 290–1; Barthes 520, 522–3; Benjamin 331–2, 441, 444; Blanchot 327, 330, 336–7; Butler 490, 493, 501; Deleuze and Guattari 621–2, 624, 632–3, 636–7; Derrida 548–9, 551, 556, 559–60; Dufrenne 154–8, 160–3, 165–6, 170; Foucault 527–9, 535; Guattari 647–8; Hegel 56–7, 68–70, 73; Heidegger 80, 83, 85, 100, 108, 115, Irigaray 383, 385; Kant 26; Kristeva 393–4, 396–7; Lyotard 586, 592–3; de Man 577, 579, 582; Merleau-Ponty 452, 455, 458, 461–70; Nancy 660, 664; Rancière 701–3, 705–7, 710–11, 713; Virilio 510–12; Žižek 417, 423
spatiality: Bachelard 174, 177; Derrida 550; Dufrenne 154, 162, 165; Guattari 647, 650, 653; Hegel 55–7; Levinas 147; Marcuse 260–1; Merleau-Ponty 458, 464, 467–8; Rancière 705
species-being 223–4, 226, 228
speech: Adorno 248; Bakhtin 272, 274–92; Bataille 340, 342, 346; Benjamin 432; Freud 319–20; Gadamer 190; glossary 720, 722, 724, 728; Irigaray 378–81, 386; Kristeva 392–3, 395, 401, 404–6; Lacan 351–2, 357, 361, 368–9; Levinas 141; Lyotard 589; Rancière 404, 706; Ricoeur 196–208;
speech act 383, 489, 582–3, 728
speed 432, 444–5, 506–12, 602, 651–3, 723
Spinoza, B. 587, 617, 691, 725
Stalin, J. 221, 224, 370, 515
Stalinism 262, 412, 419, 693
statues: Benjamin 434–5, 448; Derrida 552, 554, 556; Hegel 55; Heidegger 99, 117; Irigaray 379; Levinas 143, 145–8; Merleau-Ponty 468, 471; Rancière 707–8, 711
Sterne, L. 274, 279–81
story-telling 278, 281
structuralism 196, 208, 515–17, 570, 574, 729–31
style: Badiou 697; Bakhtin 274–80, 283–4, 289–92; Cixous 605; Deleuze and Guattari 623–4, 626–7; Dufrenne 153–4, 159–60, 162–3, 167, 169; Foucault 532; Habermas 298–9; Irigaray 385–6; Lacan 357, 361, 365, 369–70; Lyotard 588–9, 592, 594; de Man 576; Sartre 131–2
subjectivation 491–3, 646, 649–50, 693
subjectivism 40, 114, 201, 230, 240, 245, 248, 299, 363
subjectivity: Adorno 237–41, 244–5, 248–9, 251, 253–4; Badiou 686–8, 691–2, 694; Bakhtin 277; Blanchot 329; Derrida 545–6, 548; Dufrenne 152, 155–6, 159, 166–70; Freud 316; Gadamer 191; glossary 718, 721, 725–30, 732; Guattari 643–50; 654; Habermas 299, 302, 304; Hegel 41, 46–7, 49, 51–7; Heidegger 80–1, 95, 114, 117; Kant 3–7, 11–16, 21–34; Kristeva 394, 396, 403; Marcuse 262, 265–6; Marx 225, 228–30; Merleau-Ponty 455; Nancy 658, 661; Nietzsche 62, 64, 66, 70; Ricoeur 196, 199–202, 207; Sartre 134–6; Žižek 409–10, 412, 416, 418, 421
sublation (*Aufhebung*) 223, 409, 663, 669; *see also* supersession.
sublimation: Adorno 244–5, 246; Bachelard 182; Habermas 302; Kristeva 393, 395, 401, 403; Lacan 371; Marcuse 260, 265–7; Nancy 667; Žižek 414, 418
sublime: Adorno 252; Hegel 51; glossary 731; Kant 21–2, 35; Kristeva 389–90, 394–5, 401–3; Lyotard 585–95; Nancy 659, 664, 667–8; Rancière 704–8, 711–12, 714; Žižek 413–5, 417–18
substructure 431
superego 390, 397
supersensible 3–6, 9, 21, 24–8, 30, 32, 35–6
supersession (*Aufhebung*) 223–5, 227–9, 237; *see also* sublation
superstructure 353, 370, 431
surrealism: Adorno 250; Bachelard 181–2; Badiou 694; Barthes 521; Habermas 298–9, 302–04; Lacan 358; Lyotard 587; Merleau-Ponty 458
surveillance 691–3
symbolic: Bachelard 178, 180; Badiou 693–4; Butler 488–9, 497, 501–3; Deleuze and Guattari 634; Freud 321; Hegel 41–2, 50–4, 56, 58; Gadamer 191–2; glossary 718, 725, 728, 730–2; Irigaray 374, 380–1; Kant 7, 31–2, 36; Kristeva 388–90, 393–8, 400, 402; Lacan 352, 355–6, 360, 362, 365; Lyotard 594; Merleau-Ponty 462; Nancy 665–7; Rancière 705–6; 710; Ricoeur 199, 208; Žižek 410, 417, 420, 422
symbolism 178, 244, 281–2, 360, 712–13
synaesthesia 453, 630
synthesis: Adorno 238, 244; Bataille 341–4, 346; Deleuze and Guattari 636–7; Dufrenne 155, 170; Heidegger 91, 117; Marcuse 264

taboo 251, 262, 339–40, 342–3, 345, 396, 398, 732
tactile 374–6, 442–3, 452, 457
tangibility 230, 318
taste: Adorno 240, 244, 252; Barthes 520–1; Derrida 546–7, 551–2, 554, 557–60, 562–63; Gadamer 188, 190; glossary 718; Habermas 301–3; Kant 4, 7, 10–15, 18–20, 23–5, 28–33; Lyotard 589–90, 593, 595; Sartre 128; Vattimo 215
technē 107, 588–90, 589, 661, 667–8
technical: Adorno 238, 244, 247–8, 253; Agamben 676; Badiou 690, 697; Baudrillard 478, 483, 485; Benjamin 431–2, 435, 441–4, 447, 449; Deleuze and Guattari 634–5; Derrida 547; Dufrenne 157; Habermas 303; Hegel 49; Heidegger 107; Irigaray 384; Merleau-Ponty 459; Rancière 708, 714; Vattimo 216; Virilio 508–11
technique: Adorno 238–9, 241, 245–6, 251; Baudrillard 479, 485; Benjamin: 430–1, 433, 438, 445, 447, 449; Deleuze and Guattari 631, 634, 636; Derrida 544; Dufrenne 155–7, 164; Foucault 531, 534; Gadamer 189; Habermas 302; Levinas 148; de Man 582, 588–90; Merleau-Ponty 455, 459, 462; Sartre 132; Vattimo 216; Virilio 508, 511
technology: Adorno 244, 247–8, 253; Baudrillard 478–85; Benjamin 429–49; Gadamer 189; Guattari 646, 649; Heidegger 83, 101, 107, 118; Lyotard 594–5; Marcuse 260, 262; Merleau-Ponty 464; Nancy 661, 668; Vattimo 212, 214–15; Virilio 506–12
television 478–83, 485
temples 54–5, 82–3, 96, 98–100, 105–6, 219, 663, 669
terrorism 300, 303, 366, 485
textuality: Barthes 519, 521–3; Cixous 598–612; Derrida 540–2, 556–7, 560, 562; Foucault 525–37; Gadamer 186, 188, 190–1; Lacan 351–4, 359–62; de Man 570, 574–5, 578–83; poststructuralism 517; Ricoeur 196–209
theatre: Adorno 239, 247; Badiou 690, 693, 698; Baudrillard 484; Benjamin 437, 439, 445–7; Dufrenne 156–7, 159, 162–5; Kristeva 390; Rancière 705, 707, 709; Sartre 134; Vattimo 214, 216
theology: Agamben 683; Barthes 522; Bataille 341; Benjamin 434, 448; Derrida 566; Foucault 529; glossary 724; Guattari 647; Hegel 46; Heidegger 93; Lacan 378; Irigaray 385; Levinas 141; Lyotard 589, 594; Nancy 663, 668–9
theory: Adorno 243–4, 249–50; Badiou 692, 694; Bakhtin 291, 293; Benjamin 431, 434, 436, 448; Butler 492, 494; Derrida 542–5, 548, 551–3, 556, 558, 560–1, 566; Foucault 528, 530–5; Habermas 297, 301–3; Heidegger 91, 94, 117; Irigaray 384–5; Lyotard 587, 593; de Man 570–83; Marcuse 261–2, 264–5, 267; Marx 228–30, 232; Merleau-Ponty 461–2; Nancy 665; Vattimo 216–16
thingliness 88–99, 105–6, 111–12
things in themselves: Adorno 253; glossary 732; Hegel 40, 42, 45; Heidegger 88; Kant 27–8; Nietzsche 62–4, 67; *see also* noumena
time: Agamben 677, 680–3; Badiou 696–8; Barthes 521; Bataille 342–4; Blanchot 331–6; Butler 501; Cixous 602, 608–9; Deleuze and Guattari 621, 624, 629, 632–3, 636; Derrida 546, 548–9, 551, 563; Dufrenne 154–6, 158, 161–3, 165, 170; Foucault 528, 533; Gadamer 188–9; Guattari 647–8; Habermas 298; Heidegger 115; Irigaray 380; Kristeva 393; Lacan 356; Levinas 139, 141, 145–9; Lyotard 586–88, 591, 594–5; de Man 579; Marcuse 261; Merleau-Ponty 469; Nietzsche 70; Rancière 705–7; Ricoeur 204; Vattimo 217, 219; Virilio 509–12; Žižek 415
Tintoretto 125, 129, 629
Tolstoy, L. 509, 623
totalitarianism 236, 248, 253–4, 300, 412, 422, 512, 583, 704, 712–13
totality: Adorno 243, 245, 248, 251; Blanchot 332; Dufrenne 158, 165, 167–8, 170–1; Heidegger 82, 91, 93; Hegel 46–8, 50, 54–7; Marcuse 260–1, 266; Marx 228, 231; Merleau-Ponty 454; Nancy 661–4
touch: Bachelard 180; Benjamin 443; Derrida 553–4; Heidegger 91; Kristeva 390, 395, 402; Merleau-Ponty 456, 460, 464, 469–70; Nancy 657–8, 662, 664–8; Sartre 128
trace: Barthes 522–3; Blanchot 329; Derrida 544; Freud 318, 321; Levinas 142, 147; Merleau-Ponty 457, 466, 470, 472; Nancy 660–2, 665
tradition: Adorno 250; Agamben 675–7, 680–3; Benjamin 429, 432–4, Gadamer 186–9, 191–2; Habermas 297–305; Heidegger 98, 114; Lyotard 586, 588; de Man 573; Ricoeur 207–8; Vattimo 217
tragedy 99, 146, 160, 164, 442, 522, 591, 681, 697
transcendental: Derrida 545, 547, 549, 558–61, Dufrenne 167–8, 171; Foucault 528–9; glossary 725, 732; Guattari 650; Heidegger 93; Kant 4–6, 12, 14, 24–6, 28, 34; Marcuse 265; Merleau-Ponty 454; Nancy 666
transcendental empiricism 617–8, 732
transcendental idealism 404–5, 617, 732
transcendental subject 350, 363, 627
transfiguration 160, 164, 483, 498, 675
transgression 339–46, 527, 531, 732
transparency: Barthes 520; Butler 496; Cixous 603; Deleuze and Guattari 624; Derrida 554; Lacan 363; Levinas 143; de Man 580; Merleau-Ponty 456, 466; Sartre 124, 131; Vattimo 213; Žižek 416
trompe l'oeil 157, 410, 456, 463, 478
tropes 290, 357, 365, 566, 576–7, 580–3
truth: Adorno 238, 240, 242, 244, 246–52; Agamben 675, 680–2; Badiou 687–99; Bakhtin 274–5, 279, 282–3; Barthes 522; Bataille 344; Baudrillard 478, 482; Blanchot 330–5, 337; Butler 495; Cixous 608–9; Derrida 561, 566; Dufrenne 154, 156, 162, 166, 168, 170; Foucault 531; Gadamer

187–8, 190; Guattari 648–9; Habermas 301, 303; Hegel 41, 43, 45–9, 52, 54; Heidegger 81–4, 88, 91, 93–8, 102–19; Irigaray 377, 383–6; Kristeva 397, 400–1, 403–5; Lacan 352, 355, 357, 359, 361–2, 364, 366–9; Levinas 140–1, 143–6, 148; de Man 572, 576; Marcuse 264; Merleau-Ponty 463–4, 469; Nancy 659, 663, 665–70; Nietzsche 63–4, 66–70, 72; Rancière 708, 710, 712–3; Sartre 126, 131, 133–5; Vattimo 216–19
Turgenev, I. 283, 285–6
Tzara, T. 181

unconcealedness 81–2, 93, 101, 103–4, 108, 117–18, 718
unconscious: Foucault 532; Freud 309–24, 349–53, 359–67, 371; Gadamer 187; glossary 720, 727; Guattari 643, 654; Irigaray 375, 380–1, 384–5; Kristeva 388, 392–3, 395; Levinas 142; Lyotard 587, 591; Nietzsche 68
understanding: Derrida 543, 545, 553, 559–61; Dufrenne 158, 166–7; Gadamer 188–91; Guattari 648; Hegel 47, 54; introduction 62–64; Kant 4–7, 9, 11–15, 20, 22, 24–27, 31–4; Levinas 140–1, 144; Lyotard 589–90; de Man 572, 574–5, 581–2; Marcuse 265; Merleau-Ponty 459, 463, 471; Rancière 708–9, 711; Ricoeur 195–7, 200–1, 205, 207–8
usefulness: Adorno 252; Agamben 676, 680; Blanchot 330; Derrida 558; Hegel 45; Heidegger 83, 92–5, 97, 100, 109–10; Kant 20; Marx 230; Merleau-Ponty 471
utilitarian 127, 129, 136, 160, 230
utility 45, 68, 142, 229–30, 262, 298, 692
utopia 213–17, 253, 258, 292, 302, 305, 578, 703–6, 710, 712, 715

Valéry, P.: Barthes 521; Benjamin 432, 448; Dufrenne 164–6; de Man 574; Merleau-Ponty 445; Sartre 129, 133, 137
value: Adorno 252–3; Agamben 675–7, 680–1, 683; Bachelard 176–7, 180, 182–3; Bataille 342–3; Baudrillard 478, 483, 485; Benjamin 431, 433–7, 441, 443–6; Blanchot 328, 330, 332, 337; Derrida 542, 547–8, 554, 561–2, 566; Dufrenne 166; Foucault 532, 535, 537; Guattari 646–50, 653–4; Habermas 298–300; Heidegger 116–17; Irigaray 377, 380, 384–5; Levinas 147–8; Lyotard 592–3; de Man 572, 574; Marcuse 260, 264, 266–7; Sartre 130–1, 133; Vattimo 214, 216, 218
Van Gogh, V.: Barthes 520; Cixous 601–2, 604, 607, 610; Deleuze and Guattari 623, 626, 628–9, 634, 637–9; Dufrenne 169; Heidegger 84–5, 87, 94–6, 98, 105; Merleau-Ponty 455
Vattimo, G. 212–20, 619, 724
Virilio, P. 430, 506–14, 723
visible: Agamben 682; Bachelard 179; Benjamin 441, 447; Blanchot 335–6; Butler 489, 498; Cixous 603; Deleuze and Guattari 629, 632, 637; Foucault 529, 533, 535; Habermas 303, 305; Hegel 40, 42, 48, 56–7; Heidegger 81, 90, 98–99, 105; Irigaray 377; Levinas 142; Lyotard 592–3; Merleau-Ponty 455–61, 464, 466–70, 472; Rancière 702, 705–6, 708, 715; Virilio 511
vision: Benjamin 432, 444; Deleuze and Guattari 623–4, 626–7, 632, 635, 637–8; Dufrenne 157, 165, 169; Heidegger 97, 113; Levinas 140–1, 144–7; Lyotard 593; Merleau-Ponty 452–3, 455–60, 463–6, 469–70; Virilio 506, 508–9; Žižek 410, 416
voice: Adorno 248; Barthes 520, 522; Bakhtin 270–93; Hegel 57; Dufrenne 160, 169; Lacan 356–7; Rancière 706; Ricoeur 198, 208; Sartre 131

Wagner, R. 245, 416, 480, 633, 660, 668
Wahl, J. 145
war 429–30, 443–4, 449, 477, 479–80, 482, 508–9, 512
wealth 226–7, 229–31, 498, 536, 594, 681
Weber, M. 299, 301
Wellmer, A. 222, 295–6, 303
Wolfe, T. 623–4
women 226, 259, 261, 265–8, 374–83, 386, 468, 494–500
Woolf, V. 623–4
words: Adorno 238, 247–8; Bachelard 174, 177–8, 180, 183–4; Badiou 690, 693; Bakhtin 270–93; Barthes 519, 522; Blanchot 330–6; Cixous 598–601, 603–5, 607, 609–11; Deleuze and Guattari 622, 626, 634–5; Dufrenne 156–7, 159, 163; Foucault 529, 532; Freud 311, 319–22; 324; Gadamer 190–1; Heidegger 85, 87, 89–91, 93, 99–101, 103, 106, 113–15, 118; introductions 516–17, 540–1, 672; Irigaray 377; Kristeva 392, 395, 398, 400–1; Lacan 350, 353, 355–60, 364; Levinas 141, 143; Lyotard 587, 592; de Man 576–8, 581; Merleau-Ponty 454–5, 457, 460, 469; Rancière 706; Ricoeur 199, 208; Sartre 124–33, 136–7
world of the artwork: Dufrenne 152–71; Heidegger 81–5, 93, 95, 98–102, 105–6, 108–15, 117, 119; Levinas 142–3
writing: Bachelard 178, 182; Barthes 519–23; Cixous 598–612; Foucault 526–32; Lacan 351–2, 358–61; Levinas 139, 143, 145; Ricoeur 197–202, 205; Sartre 123–37

Žižek, S. 409–25, 488, 725
zoē 673, 720, 732
Zola, E. 159, 238, 625